BRITAIN IN EUROPE: A DISCOURSE-THEORETICAL APPROACH

by

GAVIN MOORHEAD

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Sociology, Politics and Law
Faculty of Social Science and Business

September 2003

"A day will come when you France, you Russia, you Italy, you England, you Germany, all you nations of the continent, without losing your distinct qualities and your glorious individuality, shall dissolve in a higher unity and constitute the European brotherhood ..."[1]

Victor Hugo.

---

[1] As predicted in his opening speech to the Peace Congress of 1847. As cited in: Tassin, E. (1992) 'Europe: A Political Community?', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. (London: Verso). p. 191.

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the author's prior consent.

Gavin Moorhead

September 2003

Abstract

Previous research upon European integration has observed that Britain has an 'awkward partnership' with the rest of the EU. However, these analyses have not addressed how this awkward relationship reflects a difference in political and governmental discourse between Britain and the other Continental European member states. This thesis will examine this divergence. To this end, it applies the discourse-theoretical approach developed by Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Slavoj Žižek. By applying the discourse-theoretical concept of social antagonism, it will seek to explain why these discourses are different and opposed. Possible solutions to this conflict will then be identified and explored. Inspired by Laclau and Mouffe's vision of a 'radical plural democracy', this research concludes by advancing a project for a universal European identity that embraces the liberal democratic principles of 'freedom and equality for all' and transcends the national antagonisms that have plagued Europe's past.

Contents

(continued overleaf)

Figures

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the role played by the Faculty of Social Science and Business in funding this research. I want to thank my research supervisors, Dr Tony Tant and Professor Michael Thrasher, as well as Gary Smith and Liz Thomson for their technical assistance. Adrian Lee, Dr Neil Cooper and Professor Chris Evans have also provided constructive advice and encouragement.

I am also very grateful for the support of my family and friends, particularly Robert Clough, Glynn Collard, Tracey Collett, Dan Hamer, Sam Regan-de-Bere, Ron Row, Emma Smith, Sarah Watson, and Jonnyboy Wilkinson. Most of all, I would like to express a very special thank you to my mother, Medena Row, and to my girlfriend, Sophie Ruiz, for their love, encouragement, and support. This thesis is dedicated to these two very special people.

Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award.

This study was financed with the aid of a studentship from the Faculty of Social Science and Business at the University of Plymouth.

Relevant seminars and conferences were attended, including those organised by the Marxism Specialist Group and the Post-Structuralism and Radical Politics Specialist Group of the Political Studies Association (PSA).

Courses in Discourse Theory and Analysis were completed at the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection at the University of Essex.

Signed G. Moorhead

Date 10-02-04

Preface

In this thesis, the term 'Britain' is used as a convenient and instantly recognisable abbreviation for 'the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. In addition, although Britain is often described in this research as if it is an actor, it is acknowledged that 'acts' are only literally made by individuals and not states. Thus, references to Britain doing something or other are shorthand for an action taken on behalf of Britain by an authorised individual.[2]

Moreover, although the 'European Community' is now the 'European Union', the former term is retained for discussion of the period before the Treaty on European Union (TEU) came into force on 1 November 1993. From this date onwards, it has become normal practice to refer to the organisation as a whole as the 'European Union' (or 'EU'). However, as this thesis emphasises, and was previously observed by the European Court of Justice in 1975, 'it is not yet clear what the expression ('the European Union') imports'.[3] Indeed, it should be noted that the TEU is a treaty *on* rather than *of* European union. The TEU is rather opaque and takes the form of a treaty within a treaty. An entity styled 'European Union' is created and sketchily described with no legal personality, no institutions of its own

---

[2] George, S. (1998) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). p. v.
[3] Suggestion of the Court of Justice on European Union (1975) *Bulletin Supplement*, No. 9, p. 17.

and no legal powers.[4] Hence, the ensuing problems relating to its legitimacy and democratic deficit. In relation to the phrase 'European Union', it is also important to distinguish the *organisation*, the 'European Union', from the *process of* 'European union'.

Furthermore, the term 'European Community' (or 'EC') is used throughout the discussion of the pre-EU period, although the three communities (the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), and the European Economic Community (EEC)) were not formally merged until 1967. The term 'European Community' is used except where specific reference is made to one of the three communities or to the period prior to the merger.

---

[4] Nicoll, W. and T. C. Salmon. (1994) *Understanding the New European Community*. (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf). p. 281.

Introduction

The British do not like 'Frogs', 'Krauts' or 'Spics', and therefore, we certainly do not like the 'Eurocrats' or the idea of a 'European federal superstate' that they represent. *We* do not want *them* to interfere with *our* traditional British way of life. We do not want them to tell us what currency to use, how long we should work each week, or what we can eat or drink. Moreover, how dare they try? We are the British, and we have proved ourselves to be superior to them. After all, we defeated them in two world wars. So why should we surrender to them now? If we begin to concede to their wishes, it won't be long until we are once again under the threat of communists or Nazis.

Contemporary British discourse is full of such depictions of Europe[1], an image that is reflected in the words of such politicians as Patrick Nicholls:

> In short, I have no great liking for a Continent dominated by two countries, the unique contribution of one of which has been to plunge Europe into two world wars in living memory, and another which proved itself incapable of winning any war unless it is fought by the French Foreign Legion ... (and which) ... had the nerve to represent itself as a

[1] For example, on such Eurosceptic images in the British press, see: Anderson, P. J. and A. Weymouth (1999) (1999) *Insulting the Public? The British Press and the European Union*. (London, New York: Longman), and Wilkes, G. and D. Wring (1998) 'The British Press and European Integration: 1948 to 1996', in D. Baker and D. Seawright (eds) *Britain for and Against Europe: British Politics and the Question of European Integration*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press). pp. 185-205. On the response of the British Eurosceptic press to the draft EU constitution published on Monday 26 May 2003, see: Singleton, T. (2003) (2003) 'War of Words over Europe', *The Observer*, Sunday 1June. (http://politics.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,9061,968128,00.html).

> nation of resistance fighters in the second World War when, in fact, it was a nation of collaborators.[2]

Moreover, Euroscepticism is not confined to the right of British politics because the British left has also fiercely defended our sovereignty against this Continental threat.[3] As this thesis demonstrates, Euroscepticism is a political phenomenon that reflects a longstanding British national antagonism with Continental Europe.

1.0. Aims

The thesis has two research aims. First, to improve our understanding of the phenomenon of British Euroscepticism that has obstructed European political integration, and second, to explore the possibility of developing a common European identity and democratic citizenship. These aims are interrelated in that the former has been a crucial impediment to the development of the latter. Hence, the second aim requires the thesis to locate ways of overcoming the problems identified in the examination of the first aim.

However, this thesis also seeks to assess the applicability of the 'metatheoretical' character of discourse theory to concrete political research. It also hopes to contribute to the further development of discourse theory, not only in terms of the theoretical argument, but also in terms of widening the analytical focus and the

---

[2] Nicholls, P. (1994) 'Why Britain Ought to Remain the Sceptical Man of Europe', *The Western Morning News*, 23 November. p. 4.

[3] For example, opposition to membership of the EC made odd allies of Tony Benn and Enoch Powell, and the 1975 campaign for a 'no' vote in the referendum on this issue was supported by the British Communist Party, Trotskyist and Maoist Groups, as well as the National Front. (See: George, S. (1998) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press) p. 94. On Euroscepticism and the British left, see for example: Baker, D. and D. Seawright (1998) 'A 'Rosy' Map of Europe? Labour Parliamentarians and European Integration', in D. Baker and D. Seawright (eds) *Britain for and Against Europe: British Politics and the Question of European Integration*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press). pp. 57-87; Forster, A. (2002) *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties Since 1945*. (London, New York: Routledge); Holmes, M. (ed.) (1996) *The*

development of critical reflections on methodology. It will extend the related theoretical and methodological debates upon this theory by evaluating what further insights it can provide to our understanding of British Euroscepticism and British-European relations. As yet, there have been few practical research applications of discourse theory to specific political events and issues.[4] Thus, this thesis will serve to unite a key and contentious political issue with a new research application.

1.1. British Euroscepticism

In its analysis of British Euroscepticism, this thesis will examine the persistent British obstruction to the process of European political integration that culminated in the ratification crisis of the Maastricht Treaty (or 'Treaty on European Union' (TEU)) in 1992-3. It is generally accepted that Britain is perceived as an 'awkward'[5] partner of the EU by the other member states, and that this reputation has been consolidated because Britain has continued to be at odds with the major initiatives for European integration since it acquired membership of the EC in 1973.[6]

As will be demonstrated in the first part of this thesis, the acceptance and significance of Britain's reputation as an awkward partner of the EU has been the subject of much political research. However, such analyses do not adequately

---

Eurosceptical Reader. (London: Macmillan). pp. 13-71; George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. pp. 71-106, and Wilde, L. (1994) *Modern European Socialism*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth). pp. 31-3.

[4] Examples are: Howarth, D., A. J. Norval and Y. Stavrakakis (eds) (2000) *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change*. (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press); Laclau, E. (ed.) (1994) *The Making of Political Identities*. (London; Verso); Norval, A. J. (1996) *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*. (London: Verso); Smith, A. M. (1994) *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), and Torfing, J. (1998) *Politics, Regulation and the Modern Welfare State*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan).

[5] See: George, S. (1998) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

explain the phenomenon of British Euroscepticism. British Euroscepticism is *reflected* in the British obstruction to European integration rather than defined by it. It cannot be reduced to an anti-integrationary stance based upon a difference in economic, social, and political interests. Rather, as this thesis proposes, British Euroscepticism reflects a long-standing British antagonism with Continental Europe and its political ideas. The thesis argues that a discourse-theoretical approach provides a new and constructive way of examining the notion of antagonism in this context. Thus, it can help explain the British antagonism with Continental Europe and its consequent antagonism with the institutions and initiatives of the EU. It will be proposed that Britain has opposed European integration because it has been negated as equivalent to the threat posed by Continental Europe to its discursive system of identity.

This thesis illustrates how Britain's awkward partnership with the EU is linked to the phenomena of British nationalism and racism. Previous research on British Euroscepticism has not examined its intrinsic link with nationalism and racism. As observed in the second part of this thesis, research upon racism and nationalism in Britain has also neglected this link. This chapter argues that developing this link will help provide a more complete understanding of these phenomena.

Moreover, this analysis demonstrates that Britain's awkward partnership with the EU has not developed within the same theoretical and methodological discourse as that of nationalism and racism. Hence, the ways that nationalism and racism have been analysed have not had a significant impact upon the way that the British relationship with Europe has been understood. This thesis will illustrate how a discourse-theoretical approach can combine these research foci to improve

---

[6] Ibid. p. 1.

our understanding of British Euroscepticism. In addition, it is proposed that orthodox essentialist and functionalist conceptions of nationalism and racism are problematic. This thesis holds that a discourse-theoretical approach can provide a new and more productive framework for analysing such phenomena as well as that of British Euroscepticism.

The discourse-theoretical approach will also be applied to illustrate how the British antagonism with Continental Europe is reflected in a conflict in (*hegemonic*[7]) discourse. It is observed that previous research has not acknowledged that British-European integration has been obstructed by a divergence in discourse between Britain and Continental Europe, and thus, by conflicting understandings of the same key words and principles of the European debate.

This thesis also illustrates that British-European integration has been obstructed because this conflict in discourse reflects conflicting ideas and interests. As European initiatives have tended to embody Continental European ideas and interests, they have conflicted with those of British discourse. Hence, Britain has opposed the process and achieved a reputation as an awkward partner. It is illustrated that this conflict in discourse is also reflected in conflicting perceptions of the future shape of the EU. In accordance with the British discourse of 'parliamentary liberalism', the EU can only be a liberal economic market based upon intergovernmental co-operation. However, in accordance with the Continental European discourse of republican democracy/social democracy, the EU can be a broader economic, social and political union based upon notions of supranational integration and federalism. Thus, Britain has obstructed the process

---

[7] This thesis focuses upon *hegemonic* discourse, that is, *ruling* ideas, meanings and options. This discourse-theoretical concept of hegemony is explained in *Chapter 3, Section 3.*

per se because its political and governmental discourse is not amenable to such Continental European principles.

The thesis argues that British-European integration has been problematic because it has invoked a hegemonic struggle over meaning in Europe, and thus, over the meaning of 'European Union' itself. The extent to which European initiatives tend to embody Continental European ideas and interests, is that to which Britain has opposed European integration, since it would represent a Continental European victory in this hegemonic struggle.

1.2. A universal European identity and democratic citizenship

In relation to the second aim of this thesis, it is observed that the process of European integration is dislocating the discourses of Europe. Hence, this process provides us with an opportunity for progressive democratic change in Europe. As this thesis argues, British-European integration *could* be a positive goal if it came to represent the pursuit of democracy and 'freedom and equality for all' rather than the present focus upon effective competition in the global capitalist economy. It is claimed by this thesis that British Euroscepticism is a negative phenomenon in the sense that it has obstructed this potential.

As the thesis claims that there is an intrinsic link between Euroscepticism and nationalism, it is also emphasized that the EU project should not be based upon the nation. It will be argued that the present national foundation of European discourse is obstructing the development of a supranational European political community and is responsible for the continuing threat of national antagonisms

and totalitarianism in Europe. It is also instructive that the European project was initially conceived as a way to prevent the destructive consequences of nationalism from ever rising again, and to develop and maintain peace, unity, democracy and freedom. Thus, with the rise again of nationalist sentiment in contemporary Europe, combined with existing deficits in democracy, the importance of these previous goals is re-established by this thesis.

It is also argued that orthodox theories on European integration have been part of the problem rather than part of the solution because they reflect the same nationalist and capitalist hegemonic discourses that have obstructed such progressive change. However, as examined below, the discourse-theoretical approach applied by this research radically challenges the foundation of these discourses, and thus, makes it possible to identify alternative and more credible discourses. In pursuit of such credible alternatives, it is proposed that Laclau and Mouffe's project for a 'radical and plural democracy' may hold the key to the development of a European universal identity and democratic citizenship.

2.0. Theoretical approach

As indicated above, a discourse-theoretical approach will be applied to the aims of this thesis. Combined with the original works of Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek[8], the account of discourse theory by Jacob Torfing[9] is also deemed to be particularly instructive.

---

[8] The insights and arguments advanced by the psychoanalytical theory developed by Slavoj Žižek will be invoked where they are considered to directly contribute to developing the discourse-theoretical approach in relation to this research focus. A strictly Žižekean approach to this research focus would require another thesis, since the significance of the psychoanalytical theory of Žižek extends far beyond any affinity with the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe.

[9] See: Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and* Žižek. (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell).

This thesis argues that discourse theory has wide-ranging implications for social science and political research because it represents a powerful challenge to the traditional theories of modernity and makes conceivable a new range of political projects. At a theoretical level, discourse theory offers solutions to the problems associated with the declared limits of modernity. It claims that the modernist project is limited by its aim to ground knowledge, ethical beliefs and judgements on 'objective' and 'essential' foundations. The questioning of such foundations and recognition of their limitations has led to what has been described as a 'postmodern' perspective. Thus, discourse theory can be considered a postmodern approach because it questions the essentialist and foundational assumptions of the traditions and disciplines of modernity.

This thesis holds that previous research upon British-European relations has reflected the problems associated with the limits of modernity. Traditional theories of British-European relations are 'essentialist' because they assume the existence of an underlying essential principle that structures the social totality.[10] That is, a force or region within the social totality is conceived as the essentialist principle that makes intelligible social phenomena and their mutual relationships. For example, Marxist analyses of British-European relations frequently reflect a form of essentialism described as 'economism', confering explanatory primacy to the basic contradiction and the endogenous economic laws of capitalism. However, it will be illustrated how a discourse-theoretical approach can examine various elements, and their inter-relationship, without the assumption of a single and predetermined essential principle.

---

[10] See: Derrida, J. (1978) [1967] *Writing and Difference*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul). pp. 278-9.

In addition, classical Marxist approaches to ideology are limited in their grounding in an essentialist conception of society and social agency. They thus assume that ideology masks an objective, true and 'real' world. However, as will be explained, the extra-ideological reality is already ideological: without an objective world of 'real' essences against which we can demask ideological forms of representation, the Marxist theory of ideology has no meaning.[11] Hence, this thesis proposes that an anti-essentialist conception of ideology better facilitates our understanding of the phenomenon of British Euroscepticism. In contrast to previous analyses of British-European integration, it is argued that it is more instructive to apply the psychoanalytical approach developed by Žižek, and thus conceive British Euroscepticism as an 'ideological fantasy'.

It must be emphasized that the discourse-theoretical critique of modernity and essentialist theory should not be considered as an abstract or negative pursuit. The anti-essentialist theory of Laclau and Mouffe provides new theoretical arguments and insights as well as instructive empirical analyses. Moreover, the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe has important political implications and is shaped by their commitment to 'radical plural democracy'. Although discourse theory itself is politically indeterminate, the Marxist ambition to change the world is affirmed by Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek. Thus, they have been described as 'affirmative' rather than as 'sceptical' postmodernists.[12] Rather than providing a pessimistic assessment of the possibility of a social revolution in our time, they believe postmodernity makes a whole range of new political projects conceivable.

---

[11] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 114.
[12] Rosenau, I. R. (1992) *Post-modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). pp. 14-17.

The 'Phronesis' of Laclau and Mouffe acknowledges wide agreement that the left-wing project is in crisis. New antagonisms have emerged that require the reformulation of the socialist ideal in terms of an extension and deepening of democracy. The critique of essentialism is the necessary condition for understanding the widening of the field of social struggles characteristic of the present stage of democratic politics. Thus, the objective is to establish a dialogue between these theoretical developments and left-wing politics. An anti-essentialist stand is the sine qua non of a new vision for the Left conceived in terms of a radical plural democracy.[13]

For Laclau and Mouffe, a radical democratic politics is made possible because postmodernity is a crisis of the self-foundation of modernity and *not* a crisis of its political project. This thesis shares the aim of Laclau and Mouffe to disentangle liberal democracy from the rationalism of the Enlightenment, and also to free it from its association with capitalism and its correlate of economic liberalism.[14]

To this end, the first stage is achieved through the conception of democratic citizenship that goes beyond liberalism and communitarianism. The second stage is realized through the advancement of the concept of 'radical plural democracy'. In sum, Laclau and Mouffe aim to help overcome the crisis of the Left by developing a new hegemonic project that articulates liberal and communitarian values with traditional socialist goals. In due course, this thesis examines the possibility of a radical plural democracy and citizenship in Europe. However, the

---

[13] The 'Phronesis' is the series of work edited by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and this description of its goals is given at the beginning of its texts. See, for example, the first page of: Laclau, E. (1990) *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time*. (London, New York: Verso).
[14] Mouffe, C. (1987) 'Rawls: Political Philosophy without Politics', *Philosophy and Social Criticism,* Volume 13, No. 2, pp. 105-6; Mouffe, C. (1992a) 'Preface: Democratic Politics Today', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. (London: Verso). pp. 2-3.

problems posed for these developments by the 'British anti-democratic offensive' are also examined.

The discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe responds to the practical concern that essentialist theory tends to construct a political horizon in which authoritarian practices are legitimised and radical democratic pluralist negotiations of difference are foreclosed.[15] It is thus proposed that the radical democratic project, to which this research hopes to contribute, must be based upon anti-foundationalist epistemological and ontological assumptions. Democracy should be 'radically pluralist' in the sense that the plurality of different identities is not grounded in any transcendent or underlying positive foundation.[16] However, anti-essentialism is not in itself a panacea against authoritarianism because it is politically indeterminate.

Thus, a discourse-theoretical approach responds to the problem of the unfulfilled potential of liberal democracy in Europe. The liberal democratic values of 'freedom and equality for all' have not swept Europe, and they have largely been ignored in the process of European integration. The commonly acknowledged 'democratic deficit'[17] of the political institutions of the EU has not been resolved, and the EU project so far has focused primarily upon economic integration and the completion of the single market. Moreover, a European social dimension was advanced relatively late (and implemented even later) in the process of European integration, and it was advanced and accepted primarily as a necessary

---

[15] Smith, A. M. (1998) *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*. (London, New York: Routledge). pp. 42-43.
[16] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 256.
[17] See, for example: Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) *Legitimacy and the European Union*. (London, New York: Longman). pp. 26-9, 59-93; Boyce, B. (1993) 'The Democratic Deficit of the European Community', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 46, No. 4, October, pp. 458-477; Dinan, D. (1994) *Ever Closer Union?* (London: Macmillan). pp. 288-292; Featherstone, K. (1994) 'Jean Monnet and the 'Democratic Deficit' of the EU', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 32, No. 2, June, pp. 149-170, and Neunreither, K. (1994) 'The Democratic Deficit of the European

requirement for economic progress rather than as a initiative to remedy social and economic inequality in Europe. Thus, as this thesis advocates, the goals of socialism need to be reinscribed within the framework of a radical pluralist democracy and articulated within the institutions of political liberalism.[18]

Fundamental principles and essentialist identities are inherently anti-democratic and reactionary because they obstruct the 'rules of the game' of liberal democracy. Moreover, the conflicting fundamental principles and essentialist identities of Britain and Continental Europe have obstructed the process of European integration and the development of a European universal identity and democratic citizenship. Thus, one way to help undermine this obstruction is to question the whole idea of fundamental principles and essentialist identities. As discourse theory is radically anti-essentialist, it can make an important contribution in this respect.

Indeed, in relation to the secular eschatologies of liberalism and Marxism, it is proposed by this thesis that an anti-essentialist approach is much better equipped to analyse the politics of identity flourishing in the contemporary era. It can help explain the plurality of identities, conflicts, struggles and social movements that cannot be made intelligible by a single essential principle such as the nation or class. Thus, it can elucidate upon the plurality of identities, conflicts, struggles and social movements that traverse the national and class divisions of Europe. Furthermore, it can help make intelligible the plurality of *national* identities, conflicts and interests that have obstructed the process of supranational European

---

Union: Towards Closer Cooperation between the European Parliament and the National Parliaments', *Government and Opposition*, Volume 29, No. 3, pp. 299-314.

[18] Smith, C. (1993) 'Towards a Liberal Socialism', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *The Return of the Political*. (London: Verso). p. 90.

integration and the development of a European universal identity and democratic citizenship.

3.0. Structure

This thesis is divided into three parts. The first part (*Chapters 1-2*) examines the existing theory and literature upon European integration and British-European relations, and subsequently, the discourse-theoretical approach employed here (*Chapter 3*). The second part (*Chapters 4-5*) will apply the discourse-theoretical approach to British-European relations, and the final part (*Chapters 6-7*) will examine the possibility of a European universal identity and democratic citizenship.

In *Part I*, *Chapters 1-2* provide a review of previous literature and theories, which are examined in detail for two reasons: first, to establish the subject and context of this thesis, and second, to illustrate the different ways in which this subject has been conceived prior to this discourse-theoretical analysis. *Chapter 1* relates to the research aim of examining the possibility of the development of a universal European identity, and thus, it examines the orthodox theories of international relations that have dominated the study of European integration. With regard to the research aim of improving our understanding of British Euroscepticism, *Chapter 2* examines previous accounts of the British relationship with the EC/EU from its membership in 1973 to the ratification of the TEU in 1993. *Chapter 3* provides an account of the discourse-theoretical approach, which is directed towards its application to these specific research aims.

Part II relates to the first aim of this research, to develop our understanding of the British obstruction to European integration. In an examination of the debate upon the TEU, *Chapter 4* focuses predominantly upon the concept of 'discourse' to illustrate that the process of European integration has been obstructed because Britain and Continental Europe have different discourses, and thus, conflicting understandings of the same concepts and principles. It is also observed that successful European integration depends upon the way that EU initiatives resonate with these different discourses. In this sense, Britain can be perceived as an 'awkward' or 'irrational' partner because the ideas, meanings and options of its hegemonic discourse conflict with those of Continental Europe which tend to be embodied within EU initiatives. In all, this chapter illustrates that Britain and Continental Europe have different political and governmental discourses, and then examines how this conflict obstructed the Maastricht debate upon the principle of 'subsidiarity', and thus, progress towards 'an ever closer union'.

Chapter 5 focuses more upon the discourse-theoretical principle of 'social antagonism' to explain *why* these discourses are different and opposed. It is argued that this conflict in discourse reflects a British antagonism with Continental Europe, and that this antagonism is a discursive response to dislocation. This chapter explores why dislocation in Britain was responded to by the construction of this antagonism, that is, why Continental Europe was identified as the cause of dislocation in Britain.

In addition, this chapter investigates why sovereignty has been such an obstructing issue for Britain and certainly more so than for the other member states. It also observes that the growing implications of European integration, as

particularly expressed by the TEU, invoked a tension within the articulation of British economic liberalism and parliamentary sovereignty. Hence, the process of European integration exposed the 'contingency' and 'mythical' status of this discursive articulation, and this played a significant role in the demise of Thatcher in 1990 and the Major Government in 1997.

It is illustrated that British-European integration has been obstructed because Continental Europe and Continental European discourse represent the 'radical and threatening otherness' (or constitutive outside) for the British identity. That is, the construction of the limits of the British discursive system of identity has involved the construction of a social antagonism with Continental Europe. Here, it is also observed that British Eurocentricism is intrinsically linked to nationalism and racism, which also represent the dislocating antagonistic threat of 'the Other'.

Part III relates to the second aim of this research, the possibility of developing a common European identity and democratic citizenship. Thus, it explores ways of overcoming the problem of British Euroscepticism, as examined in *Part II*. Therefore, it is also assessed whether the discourse-theoretical approach holds the key to the questions and criticisms that it has invoked.

Chapter 6 presents the discourse-theoretical critique of the modernist discourse that is reflected in orthodox approaches to European integration, as described in *Chapters 1-2*. It is argued that these modernist approaches are limited by their essentialist and Eurocentric foundations. Previous chapters argue that British discourse has obstructed British-European integration, and that Continental European discourse is more amenable to supranational European integration and

the development of a democratic European political community. However, this does not mean that the ideas and interests of Continental European modernist discourse should be presented as universal truths or can be universally applied. Indeed, the Continental European discourse of modernity has also obstructed the development of a supranational and democratic European community because its conception of democracy is intrinsically linked to capitalism and nationalism.

Chapter 6 also observes that the tension between neo-functional/supranational and neo-realist/intergovernmental approaches to European integration (as examined in *Chapter 1*) reflects the dilemma posed by the conceptual dyad of the universal and the particular. That is, neo-functionalism/supranationalism prioritizes the development of a *universal* European identity, while neo-realist/intergovernmentalism privileges the *particularities* of the member states. From a different perspective, it can also be argued that the *particularities* of member states undermine the *universal* assumptions advanced by both these approaches. In direct contrast, approaches to British-European (as examined in *Chapter 2*) tend to produce a *false particularisation* of Britain. However, it is demonstrated that a discourse-theoretical approach can help overcome the problems posed by the universal/particular dyad, and thus, it can provide a new path for the development of a European universal identity and citizenship.

To complete this thesis, *Chapter 8* examines whether Laclau and Mouffe's project for a radical plural democracy could provide a credible project for the development of a universal European identity and democratic citizenship. It is assessed whether the radical plural democratic pursuit of 'freedom and equality for all' can

help overcome the democratic deficits and national antagonisms of Europe, and thus, the obstruction caused by British Euroscepticism.

The conclusion of thesis will present an evaluation of the contribution made by this discourse-theoretical approach to our understanding of the British obstruction to European integration. In addition, with specific regard to the problem posed British Euroscepticism, it will assess whether a discourse-theoretical approach holds the key to the development of a universal European identity and democratic citizenship.

Part I

Literature and Method

Chapter 1

Theories of International Relations and the Process of European Integration

Introduction

This chapter relates to the research aim of exploring the possibility of developing a European identity. It examines the orthodox theories of international relations that have dominated the *theory* and *practice* of the process of European integration. These theories have advanced competing *universal* assumptions to explain the international actions of states, and consequently, they advance conflicting visions of the future form of the EU. As will be illustrated, the two major theories are 'neo-functionalism' and '(neo-) realism[1]', and respectively, these conflicting approaches have reflected the supranational and intergovernmental possibilities for Europe.

1.0. The possibility of a collective European identity

Attempts to theorise the relationship between EC/EU identity, legitimacy and institutional development have marked important milestones in the intellectual history of European integration. Theories have tended to emphasise the importance of developing a collective European identity. Even a minimalist

[1] This thesis does not distinguish between 'realism' and 'neo-realism' because there is no difference between them that is relevant or significant to the specifics of this research project. See: Grieco, J. M. (1988) 'Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest

definition of integration - the 'dependable expectations' that political change would only occur by peaceful means - was seen to require a 'sense of community'.[2] However, when it came to the more difficult challenge of integrating separate European states into a single political system, the early post-war federalist movement foundered on the objection that such an institutional order could not be willed into existence in a single moment.[3] In the absence of a sense of a shared political identity, a European supranational government would be ignored and lack authority.[4]

Hence, the problem was passed on to those who were prepared to consider how European identity, legitimacy and institutions might develop incrementally and interactively. As examined below, *neo-functionalists* have sought to demonstrate how European integration could 'spill-over' from one policy area to another, and how a supranational European political identity could, correspondingly, spill-over from one elite to another before embracing a wider public. For Ernst Haas, integration is defined as a process in which organised 'political actors' would be gradually persuaded to shift their 'loyalties and expectations' towards a new centre.[5] In the same genre, later reflections presented elites as diffusing the new identity across classes and social groups through pluralistic political activities of parties and interest groups.[6]

Liberal Institutionalism', *International Organization*, Volume 42, No. 3, p. 485.

[2] Deutsch, K., S. Burrell, R. Kann, M. Lee, M. Lichtermann, F. Loewenheim and R. Van Wagenen (1957) *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press). p. 36

[3] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) *Legitimacy and the European Union*. (London, New York: Addison Wesley). p. 34.

[4] Harrison, R. (1974) *Europe in Question: Theories of Regional International Integration*. (London: Allen and Unwin).

[5] Haas, E.B. (1958) *The Uniting of Europe*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press). pp. 12-13.

[6] Schmitter, P. (1971) 'A Revised Theory of Regional Integration', in L. N. Lindberg and S. A. Scheingold (eds*) Regional Integration: Theory and Research*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press). pp. 232-264.

In contrast, intergovernmentalists insisted that European integration must be rethought because political identities would, and should, remain national in character. For example, De Gaulle was concerned that supranational constructions would produce a legitimacy vacuum. States that were of diminishing importance to their physical and economic success would simply lose public loyalty rather than it being transferred to supranational institutions, which lacked public support. As a consequence, Europe would be all the more easily dominated from the outside.[7]

The prominent intergovernmentalist, Stanley Hoffman, has argued that patterns of international co-operation would adapt to obstinately national patterns of identity, rather than vice versa.[8] More recently, another intergovernmentalist, Andrew Moravcsik, proposed that preferences on major issues of European integration would continue to be formed in the 'domestic' arena.[9] Since only domestic institutions correspond to relatively uncontested identities, only national democracies have the capacity to settle arguments authoritatively and legitimately. Hence, intergovernmentalists propose that major measures of integration have to be theorised as a two-stage bargaining process in which EU negotiations begin from - and are always constrained by - the interests of legitimately formed majorities in the major member states.

---

[7] Kolodziej, E. (1974) *French International Policy under De Gaulle and Pompidou*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press).

[8] Hoffman, S. (1966) 'Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe'. *Daedalus*, Volume 95, pp. 862-915, Tranholm-Mikkelsen, J. (1991) 'Neo-functionalism: Obstinate or Obsolete? A Reappraisal in the Light of the New Dynamism of the EC', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Volume 20, Part 1, p. 8.

[9] Moravcsik, A. (1991) 'Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community', *International Organisation*, Volume 45, No. 1, pp. 19-56; Moravcsik, A. (1993) 'Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 31, No. 4, pp. 473-524; Moravcsik, A. (1993) 'Introduction', in Evans, P., H. Jacobson and R. D. Putnam (eds) *Double-edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*. (Berkeley: University of California Press).

In sum, an important distinction between the two contending theories of European integration lies in the different assumptions that they make in relation to the possibility and validity of European identity formation. Neo-functionalists are optimistic about the possibility of developing a valid supranational collective European identity; neo-realists are pessimistic about this possibility and refute its validity. Reflecting their opposing positions, neo-functionalism has proved to be credible in times of progress in the development of a collective Europe, while intergovernmentalism has dominated in times of paralysis. However, there is an observable overlap between the two theories in the sense that even neo-functionalists have anticipated that European identity would be tenuous at the beginning of the integration process, and thus, that the EC/EU would have to 'piggy-back' for a time on the legitimating force of the state.[10] Both seem to agree that identity is likely to be the weakest link for the EU, and new solutions to this problem are explored in *Part III*.

2.0. Neo-functionalism and regional integration

Neo-functionalism has been described as a harnessing of functional methods to federalist goals.[11] However, the most prominent functionalist, David Mitrany, disapproved of this 'misapplication'. Mitrany was concerned about peace rather than regionalism or federalism, and he feared that the attempts to achieve European unity would simply create the follies of nationalism on a larger scale.[12]

By contrast, other important functionalists, such as Jean Monnet, believed that West European unity was crucial for post-war European economic

---

[10] Wallace, W. and J. Smith (1995) 'Democracy or Technocracy? European Integration and the Problem of Popular Consent', *Western European Politics*, Volume 18, No. 3, p. 139.
[11] Tranholm-Mikkelsen, J. (1991) Op. Cit. p. 3.
[12] See: Mitrany, D. (1943) *A Working Peace System*. (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Press.

redevelopment. To this end, the aim of this unity was 'to create a huge continental market on the European scale'.[13]

The original formulations of neo-functionalism can be found in the work of Haas[14] and Lindberg.[15] They studied 'regional integration' in general and European integration in particular. They both developed a theory of regional integration on the basis of studies of the early experiences of the EC.[16] Haas and Lindberg defined 'integration' as a *process* rather than as a *condition*. This process involves a degree of institution-building in the new centre. They emphasize that integration changes the expectations and activities of political actors, that is, of a wide range of societal elites within parties, bureaucracies and interest groups.

Haas and Lindberg developed a comprehensive body of theory on regional integration, the aim of which was to describe, explain, and predict.[17] However, their work reflects a sympathy with the project of European integration and thus, neo-functionalism may also be viewed as a strategy and a prescription. Therefore, the fate of neo-functionalism has been linked to the success of the integration process. This link is also apparent because neo-functionalism was developed in direct response to the emergence of the EC.

---

[13] See: Monnet, J. (1962) 'A Ferment of Change', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 1, p. 205.
[14] Haas, E. B. (1958) Op. Cit.
[15] Lindberg, L. N. (1963) *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
[16] Lindberg confined his analysis to the European Economic Community (EEC), while Haas based his study upon the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). However, Haas extended his conclusions to both the EEC and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).
[17] Haas, E. B. (1971) 'The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing', in L. N. Lindberg and S. A. Scheingold (eds) Op. Cit. p. 6.

2.1. The logic of spill-over

The main thesis of neo-functionalism is that integration within one sector will tend to beget its own impetus and spread to other sectors. The establishment of supranational institutions designed to deal with functionally specific tasks will set in motion economic, social and political processes which generate pressures towards further integration. This snowball effect is described as the logic of 'spill-over'[18], and has three aspects:

(i) Functional spill-over: This arises from the inherent technical characteristics of the functional tasks themselves. It is held that some sectors within industrial economies are so interdependent that it is impossible to treat them in isolation. Hence, as envisaged by Jean Monnet, attempts to integrate certain functional tasks will inevitably lead to problems that can only be resolved by integrating yet more tasks.[19]

(ii) Political spill-over: This occurs from the assumed pluralist nature of West European societies and from a conception of politics that owes much to early 'group theorists'.[20] In such pluralist societies, politics is based upon conflict between (governmental and non-governmental) 'elites' pursuing their own aims. These elites will undergo a learning process and develop the perception that their interests are better served by seeking supranational rather than national solutions. Hence, they will refocus their activities, expectations, and loyalties to the new centre. This reorientation will lead to calls for further integration.

---

[18] See: Haas, E. B. (1958) Op. Cit. pp. 283-31; Lindberg, L. N. (1963) Op. Cit. pp. 10-11.
[19] See: Haas, E. B. (1958) Op. Cit. p. 297; Lindberg, L. N. (1963) Op. Cit. p. 10.
[20] See: Lindberg, L. N. (1963) Op. Cit. p. 9.

(iii) Cultivated spill-over: This emphasizes the role of central institutions, especially the European Commission, in providing the pressure for further integration. Such institutions were to embody the 'common interest' and function as 'midwives' for the integration process.[21] Thus, it is proposed that the outcome of the integration process is to a degree dependent upon the ability of the Commission to perform these roles. Cultivated spill-over, therefore, constitutes the voluntaristic element in the otherwise deterministic theory of neo-functionalism.

In sum, derived from their observations of the early experiences of the EC, Haas and Lindberg proposed that sectoral integration is inherently expansive, that integration of some functional tasks tends to spill over into integration of other tasks. Haas further argued that an acceleration of the integration process could be 'safely predicted' and that it might lead to a 'political community of Europe' within a decade.[22] Lindberg shared his optimism, although he did acknowledge that, 'there are a number of ways in which the process of political integration might be interrupted'.[23]

2.2. Failures and denunciations

Ensuing EC development led to a number of criticisms of the original formulations of neo-functionalism by intergovernmentalists and independence theorists. Conflicting with the bold and optimistic predictions of neo-functionalism, by the beginning of the 1980s, such critics observed that intergovernmental elements had been strengthened at the expense of the supranational, that the EC was increasingly paralysed, and that the prospects of major spill-overs had waned.[24]

---

[21] Tranholm-Mikkelsen, J. (1991) Op. Cit. p. 6.
[22] Haas, E. B. (1958) Op. Cit. p. 311.
[23] Lindberg, L. N. (1963) Op. Cit. p. 293.
[24] Tranholm-Mikkelsen, J. (1991) Op. Cit. p. 8.

Unexpected empirical developments and theoretical criticisms led to the revision and finally, the almost complete abandonment of the original formulation of neo-functionalism. First, responding to the advent of de Gaulle and the intergovernmentalist objections raised by Hoffman, the automaticity of spill-over was abandoned. Second, the resistance displayed by De Gaulle made it necessary for Haas to specify the conditions under which the theory was applied. He contended that the functioning of the logic of integration depended upon the goals of statesmen and non-governmental elites being 'incremental-economic' rather than 'dramatic-political'. Relying upon this assumption, neo-functionalism became based upon pragmatism and technocratic policy-making.[25]

Following David Easton's systems model of 'domestic politics', Lindberg went on to develop a more comprehensive framework in which spill-over was reduced to one mechanism among others.[26] Similarly, Haas downgraded neo-functionalism as a whole to one 'pre-theory' among others.[27] In direct reference to the interdependence theory of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, examined below, Haas conceded that the study of regional integration should be, 'included in and subordinated to the study of changing patterns of interdependence'.[28]

---

[25] Haas, E. B. (1967) 'The Uniting of Europe and the Uniting of Latin America', *Journal of Common Market Studies*. Volume 5, No. 4, pp. 315-43.
[26] See: Lindberg, L. N. (1967) 'The European Community as a Political System: Notes Toward the Construction of a Model', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 5, No. 4, pp. 344-87, Lindberg, L. N. and S. A. Scheingold (1970) *Europe's Would-Be Polity*. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall). On David's Easton's systems model, see: Easton, D. (1971) [1953] *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).
[27] Haas, E. B. (1971) Op. Cit. pp. 18-26.
[28] Haas, E. B. (1975) *The Obsolescence of Regional Integration Theory.* (Research Series, No. 25, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkley, California). p. 86.

2.3. A re-emergence of neo-functionalism?

Thus, the fate of neo-functionalism has reflected the fate of the EC project. Initially, the developments of the EC seemed to vindicate neo-functionalism: when neo-functionalism was first formulated, the ECSC had already 'spilled-over' into the Euratom and the EEC, both established by the Treaties of Rome (1957). In the following years, the EC was embedded in much optimism. However, by the mid-1970s, neo-functionalism had not been able to explain or predict EC developments. Nevertheless, after more than a decade of Euro-pessimism, European integration seemed to gain pace in the second half of the 1980s: a settlement was finally reached on the British budgetary contribution at the Fontainebleau Summit in June 1984, and in the following year, the White Paper on the internal market was adopted and agreement upon the Single European Act was secured.

Tranholm-Mikkelsen argued that this new dynamism of the EC reflected a re-emergence of neo-functionalism and the logic of spill-over. He observed a significant increase in the pace of European integration from 1985 onwards, and he claimed that neo-functionalist pressures were at least as much in evidence then as they had been in the early years of the EC. He concluded that these pressures had played an important role in speeding up integration and that since 1985, there had been a re-emergence of the neo-functionalist logic.[29]

Tranholm-Mikkelsen nevertheless acknowledges various limitations of neo-functionalism. Most apparent, the logic of spill-over has been more evident in some periods than others: it prevailed until the mid-1960s and was considered to play a significant role in the wake of the adoption of the White Paper on the

internal market in 1985. As both these phases relied upon a strategy of economic liberalisation underpinned by legal commitments to specific measures and a fixed timetable, he deduces that these circumstances are the most conductive to the logic of 'spill-over'.[30]

2.4. Prevailing limitations: the problems of nationalism and diversity

Tranholm-Mikkelsen acknowledges the limitations of neo-functionalism. He recognises that, even in the dynamic phase after 1985, neo-functionalism does not provide an all-encompassing framework for an understanding of the integration process. He believes that some of the earlier criticisms are still valid and that intergovernmentalism and interdependence theory contain important insights which cannot be ignored.[31] Moreover, as the focus of neo-functionalism is the dynamics of integration, Tranholm-Mikkelsen argues that the other side of the equation has been under-emphasised. Countervailing forces, assumed to be always implicit in neo-functionalism, were never subjected to the same degree of scrutiny. As will now be examined, Tranholm-Mikkelsen believes there are two countervailing forces that limit the effects of the logic of spill-over.

The first is 'nationalism', as reflected in the continued adherence to the symbols of sovereignty by so-called 'dramatic-political' actors. This force was epitomised by de Gaulle between 1958 and 1969, and by Thatcher between 1979 and 1990. However, such resistance cannot be simply reduced to the personal preferences of individual leaders. Both de Gaulle and Thatcher had a constituency for nationalist ideas among the public at large. Their success exposes the limitations of a framework confined to the perceptions and activities of elites. Thus, although

---

[29] Tranholm-Mikkelsen, J. (1991) Op. Cit. p. 16.
[30] Ibid.

Tranholm-Mikkelsen argues that integration is propelled by the pragmatic pursuit of group interests that are represented by a very small layer of people, he also proposes that this cannot continue without some degree of European community ('Gemeinschaft') among the wider people. Hence, in conflict with its acceptance of early group theory's focus upon the actions of a plurality of elites[32], he concedes that neo-functionalism cannot entirely ignore the role of popular attitudes.

The second countervailing force is 'diversity'. Member states have significant administrative, economic, political and social differences, and this impedes agreement upon common substantive policies.[33] For example, common social policies have proved difficult because of the different traditions of employee co-determination in management[34]; and regional policies have created conflicts of economic interests between the rich northern states and the poorer southern states.[35]

In the EU decision-making process, these two countervailing forces are represented by the individual governments and are channelled through the Council of Ministers, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) and the system of sub-committees. That is, these forces are represented by the intergovernmental rather than supranational frameworks of the EU, and thus, they affirm realism and interdependence theory rather than neo-functionalism.

For Tranholm-Mikkelsen, such limitations do not suggest that neo-functionalism should be abandoned. He argues that the important role played by the logic of

---

[31] Ibid.
[32] See: Lindberg, L. N. (1963) Op. Cit. p. 9.
[33] See, for example: Wallace, H. (1985) *Europe: The Challenge of Diversity*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).
[34] See, for example: Huelshoff, M. G. (1993) 'European Integration After the SEA: The Case of the Social Charter', *Political Research Quarterly*, Volume 46, No. 3, pp. 619-640.
[35] Tranholm-Mikkelsen, J. (1991) Op. Cit. p. 17.

spill-over during the new dynamic period of the EC confirms that neo-functionalism is indispensable to the understanding of European integration.[36] Rather, he concludes that the three major approaches are 'partial' theories, and thus, theoretical attempts are required to integrate insights from all of them.[37]

As explained in *Chapter 6*, this thesis argues that the above countervailing forces reflect the problem that the *particular* poses for the *universal* assumptions advanced by *any* theory of international relations. Universal assumptions cannot adequately explain the *diverse* particularities of individual member states. For example, particular member states may have a particular adherence to the symbols of *nationalism* and *national sovereignty*, and related to this proposition, they may have political and governmental discourses that make them more Eurosceptic than others. For example, as the literature examined in *Chapter 2* suggests, British particularities have made it relatively more 'Eurosceptic' than other member states. Hence, as this thesis emphasizes, such particularities make different member states act and behave in accordance to different theories of international relations. For example, the international action of Britain is closer to the assumptions of realism and interdependence theory, while the international actions of Continental European member states have tended to be closer to the assumptions of neo-functionalism.

3.0. Interdependence theory

Interdependence theory and neo-functionalism share a number of assumptions and concerns commonly associated with the so-called 'pluralist' image of

---

[36] See: Ibid. p. 19.
[37] Ibid.

international relations.[38]First, they downplay the significance of formal state boundaries; second, they emphasise the importance of non-governmental actors in world politics, and third, they emphasise the prevalence of non-military issues in the dealings among non-socialist so-called 'developed' states.

Such a common ground is evidenced by the use of the term 'interdependence' by Haas to describe the relationship among the EC member states.[39] Similarly, the most prominent interdependence theorists, Keohane and Nye, explicitly and repeatedly acknowledge their indebtedness to the neo-functionalists.[40] However, similar to this thesis, interdependence theory is critical of the *teleological* orientation of neo-functionalism.[41] That is, the implicit or explicit predilection that the EC will inevitably develop into a new political unit centred around the European Commission. By contrast, interdependence theory does not necessarily imply integration and, where integration does occur, it does not profess predilections for any particular institutional outcome. Interdependence is a *condition* rather than a *process*, and its possible integrative consequences are based upon political acts that are not predicted by the theory.

Interdependence theory is also critical of the regional orientation of neo-functionalism.[42]Interdependence is a global phenomenon, not just a regional one. The 'optimal area' for co-operation may encompass more countries than the other EC member states and thus, governments may prefer other fora than the EC

---

[38] Webb, C. (1983) 'Theoretical Perspectives and Problems', in H. Wallace, W. Wallace and C. Webb (eds) *Policy-Making in the European Community*. (Chichester: John Wiley). pp. 1-41.
[39] See, for example: Haas, E. B. (1968) 'Technology, Pluralism and the New Europe', in J. S. Nye (ed.) *International Regionalism*. (Boston, Little Brown).
[40] See, for example: Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1975) 'International Interdependence and Integration', in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby (eds) *Handbook of Political Science*. Volume 8, Chapter 5. (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley). p. 365.; Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1977) *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. (Boston: Little Brown). pp. 247-48.
[41] Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1975) Op. Cit. pp. 363-414.
[42] Ibid.

machinery. This global perspective gives interdependence theory the added advantage of setting integration theory into general international relations theory.[43]

4.0. Intergovernmentalism and its critique of neo-functionalism

Intergovernmental analyses are founded upon traditional realist assumptions.[44] Intergovernmentalism is an application of the realist image of international relations to the analysis of the EC. It emphasises the coherence and adaptive capacity of nation-states; it tends to envisage EC policy-making as zero-sum bargaining on the basis of national interests, and it stresses the importance of global power political considerations.

The most fervent intergovernmentalist critic of neo-functionalism is Stanley Hoffman. His objections played a significant part in the revision, and almost complete abandonment, of neo-functionalism. It was Hoffman who posited the 'logic of diversity' as a countervailing force to the 'logic of integration', a force based upon differences in 'domestic determinants, geo-historical situations and outside aims'.[45] In accordance with the logic of diversity, neo-functionalism is limited by its neglect of the external environment of the EC. Hoffman upheld the logic of diversity as the fundamental dynamic principle of the global international system and rejected the neo-functionalist notion that it would be possible to insulate a particular region from its effects. Hence, the external environment would tend to provoke diverse responses from the member states, which in turn would create divisions and prove disintegrative.[46]

---

[43] Ibid. pp. 394-95.
[44] Cameron, D. R. (1992) 'The 1992 Initiative: Causes and Consequences', in A. Sbragia (ed.) *Euro-politics: Institutions and Policy-Making in the 'New' European Community*. (Washington, DC: Brookings).

In addition, Hoffman criticised neo-functionalism for failing to acknowledge the difference between 'high' and 'low' politics. Although it was later conceded that the labels 'high' and 'low' cannot be permanently attached to particular issues because they are a matter of momentary saliency[47], it was initially assumed that the former included issues such as defence and foreign policy while the latter concerned relatively 'uncontroversial' welfare issues. It was argued that the logic of integration might be stronger in low politics, the logic of diversity would predominate in high politics. Hence, the possibility of spill-over from economic to political integration was rejected - the hard core of sovereignty would remain intact.[48]

5.0. The realist critique of liberal institutionalism

Joseph Grieco provides a realist critique of both neo-functionalism and interdependence theory within his analysis of 'liberal institutionalism'. As he explains, prior to the 1980s, liberal institutionalism appeared in three successive presentations: first, in the *functionalist* integration theory of the 1940s and early 1950s; second, in the *neo-functionalist* regional integration theory in the 1950s and 1960s, and third, in the *interdependence theory* of the 1970s.[49]Representing the major challenge to realism, these three versions of liberal institutionalism offered a more optimistic prognosis than realism for international co-operation and a more optimistic assessment of the capacity of institutions to help states achieve it.

---

[45] Hoffman, S. (1966) Op. Cit. p. 864.
[46] Ibid. pp. 864-65.
[47] Hoffman, S. (1982) 'Reflections on the Nation-State in Western Europe Today', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 21, Nos. 1-2, pp. 29-30.
[48] Hoffman , S (1966) Op. Cit. p. 882.
[49] Grieco, J. M. (1988) Op. Cit. p. 486.

In contrast, realism presents a more pessimistic analysis of the prospects for international co-operation and of the capabilities of international institutions. International anarchy fosters competition and conflict among states and inhibits their willingness to co-operate even when they share common interests. In addition, international institutions cannot mitigate the constraining effects of anarchy upon inter-state co-operation.

Although realism accepts that the EC has become a prominent feature of European affairs, it is largely perceived as a by-product of a particular distribution of global power in the post-war period.[50] Before the Second World War, realists argue that European great powers avoided close co-operation among themselves lest some might gain more than others. However, bipolarity ended this problem:

> Not all impediments to cooperation were removed, but one important one was - the fear that the greater advantage of one would be translated into military force to be used against the others ... Living in the superpowers' shadow, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy quickly saw that war among them would be fruitless and soon began to believe it impossible. Because the security of all them came to depend ultimately on the policies of others rather than their own, unity could effectively be worked for, although not easily achieved.[51]

Hence, to a significant extent, EC co-operation rested upon Soviet-American bipolarity. It is from such a perception of the emergence and development of the EC that realism derives its pessimistic assessment of the interest of EC member states in pursuing additional regional institutionalisation. That is, if US-Soviet bipolar competition was a necessary condition for European integration, and if that competition has now ended and the international system is moving back toward multipolarity, then it is expected that member states will return to their

---

[50] Grieco, J. M. (1995) 'The Maastricht Treaty, Economic and Monetary Union and the Neo-Realist Research Programme', *Review of International Studies*, Volume 21, p. 27.
[51] Waltz, K. N. (1979) *Theory of International Politics*. (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley). pp. 70-1.

traditional concerns about one another and thus, become less attracted to co-operation through the EC.[52]

In sum, realism encompasses five main propositions. First, states are the key actors in world politics. Second, the international environment severely penalises states that fail to protect their vital interests or pursue objectives beyond their means. Hence, states are 'sensitive to costs' and behave as unitary-rational agents. Third, international anarchy is the principal force shaping motives and actions of states. Fourth, states are preoccupied with power and security, are predisposed towards conflict and competition, and often fail to co-operate even in the face of common interests. Fifth, international institutions only marginally affect the prospects for co-operation.

Liberal institutionalism rejects these propositions. First, the centrality of states is rejected: for *functionalism*, the key new actors in world politics were the specialised international agencies and their technical experts; for *neo-functionalism*, they were labour unions, political parties, trade associations, and supranational bureaucracies; and for *interdependence theory*, they were the multinational corporations and transnational and transgovernmental coalitions.[53]

Second, liberal institutionalism rejected the realist assumption that states are unitary or rational agents: functionalist accounts claimed that authority was already decentralised within modern states and was experiencing the same

---

[52] Grieco, J. M. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 28. See also: Mearsheimer, J. J. (1991) 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War', in S. M. Lynn-Jones (ed.) *The Cold War and After: Prospects for Peace*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press). pp. 141-192 (especially: pp. 182-4).
[53] See: Haas, E. B. (1964) *Beyond the Nation-State: Functionalism and International Organization*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press), pp. 32-40; Haas, E. B. (1958) Op. Cit. pp. 16-31, 113-239, 283-340; Mitrany, D. (1943) Op. Cit. pp. 17, 85-87, 133-34; Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1972) 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion', in Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (eds) *Transnational Relations and World Politics*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press). pp. ix-xxix, 371-98; Nye, J. S. (1971) 'Comparing Common Markets: A Revised Neo-Functional Model', in L. N. Lindberg and S.

process internationally.[54] Interdependence theorists claimed that modern states are increasingly characterised by 'multiple channels of access' which, in turn, progressively loosened the grip on foreign policy previously held by central decision-makers.[55]

Third and fourth, the realist emphasis upon international anarchy was countered by the proposition that states were increasingly perceiving one another as necessary partners for securing greater comfort and well-being for their home publics. Congruent to the Continental European liberal democratic understanding of a 'collective will', neo-functionalists suggested that, for Western European states:

> ... the argument is no longer over the slice of the pie to go to each; it is increasingly over the means for increasing the overall size of the pastry.[56]

Neo-functionalists claimed that states are becoming more inclined to co-operate because they were becoming less concerned about power and security. At an international level, nuclear weapons and mobilised national populations were rendering war prohibitively costly.[57]Increases in inter-nation economic contacts had left states increasingly dependent upon one another for the attainment of national goals such as growth, full employment, and price stability.[58]At a domestic level, industrialisation had brought the 'social century': the advanced democracies (and, more slowly, communist and developing countries) were becoming welfare

---

A. Scheingold (eds) Op. Cit. pp. 195-206.
[54] See: Mitrany, D. (1943) Op. Cit. pp. 54-55, 63, 69-73, 88, 134-38.
[55] See: Cooper, R. C. (1972) 'Economic Interdependence and Foreign Policies in the 1970's', *World Politics*, Volume 24, No. 2, January, pp.177-179; Haas, E. B. (1968) Op. Cit. pp. 152-56; Mitrany, D. (1943) Op. Cit. pp. 20, 32-38; Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1972) 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion', in R. O. Keohane and J. S. Nye (eds) Op. Cit. pp. xxv, 375-78; Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1977) Op. Cit. pp. 33-35, 226-29.
[56] Haas, E. B (1968) Op. Cit. p. 158.
[57] See: Mitrany, D. (1943) Op. Cit. p. 13.
[58] See: Haas, E. B. (1968) Op. Cit. pp. 161-62; Mitrany, D. (1943) Op. Cit. pp. 131-37.

states more oriented towards economic growth and social security than towards power and prestige.[59]

Fifth, liberal institutionalism rejected the realist pessimism with regard to international institutions: for functionalism, specialised agencies, such as the International Labour Organisation, could promote co-operation because they perform valuable tasks without frontally challenging state sovereignty.[60] Neo-functionalism held that supranational bodies, such as the European Economic Community, were:

> ... the appropriate regional counterpart to the national state which no longer feels capable of realizing welfare goals within its own borders.[61]

Finally, interdependence theory proposed that:

> ... in a world of multiple issues imperfectly linked, in which coalitions are formed transnationally and transgovernmentally, the potential role of international institutions in political bargaining is greatly increased.[62]

However, Grieco observes that international tensions and conflict during the 1970s undermined liberal institutionalism and reconfirmed realism. Indeed, congruent to the observations made by Tranholm-Mikkelsen above, Grieco affirms that the fate of liberal institutionalism and realism have reflected the successes and failures of initiatives for international co-operation, such as the EC project, respectively.

Accordingly, Grieco acknowledges that the international system survived the crisis period of the 1970s. As states achieved co-operation through institutions even in this harsh period, this set the stage for a renewed (albeit truncated) liberal

---

[59] See: Haas, E. B. (1968) Op. Cit. pp. 155-58; Mitrany, D. (1943) Op. Cit. pp. 41-2, 95-6, 136-7.
[60] See: Mitrany, D. (1943) Op. Cit. pp. 133-7, 198-211; Haas, E. B. (1964) Op. Cit. pp. 32-40;
[61] Haas, E. B. (1968) Op. Cit. p. 159.
[62] Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1977) Op. Cit. p. 35.

challenge to realism.[63] Thus, similar to Tranholm-Mikkelsen, Grieco observes that continuing (although from a realist perspective, 'modest') levels of inter-state co-operation were reflected in the development of a new liberal institutionalist challenge to realism during the 1980s.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the different ways that orthodox theories of international relations have explained the process of European integration, and the different assumptions and hypotheses that they hold about the present and future form of the EU. In sum, as reflected in the conflicting theories of neo-functionalism and realism respectively, it is apparent that Europe has been confronted with a choice between the contradictory principles of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism.

In contrast to realism, neo-functionalism offers a more optimistic prognosis for international co-operation and for the capacity of European institutions to help states achieve it. Hence, neo-functionalism is more optimistic about the possibility of developing a supranational European identity. Neo-functionalism predicts that economic integration will inevitably lead to political integration, and thus, that the EU will have a supranational political framework. In contrast, realism argues that the EU reflects an intergovernmental political framework based upon co-operation between sovereign member states.

It is also evident that, although realism *assumes* that Europe will continue to develop upon an intergovernmental basis, neo-functionalism differs because of its determinism and teleological *predictions* about the future supranational form of

---

[63] Grieco, J. M. (1988). Op. Cit. p. 492.

Europe. In this respect, neo-functionalism reflects its structuralist heritage, and thus, its commonality with the Marxist tradition. However, as this chapter has indicated, such determinism and teleological predictions are undermined by the many changes in the direction and form of Europe. Moreover, as explained in *Chapter 3*, this thesis challenges the theoretical assumptions of such orthodox structuralist approaches. In sum, this thesis argues that the 'undecidable' nature of the process of European integration demands a discourse-theoretical approach.

It should also be acknowledged that both neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism have political agendas: they represent a praxis of theory and action. Post-war, intergovernmentalists and functionalists set out to change the political discourse of Europe, and the present form of the EU still reflects the ensuing battle between these two conflicting political forces. Thus, these are not merely descriptive and reactive theories examining the process of European integration from 'outside', they are proactive and reactive political forces of this process. That is, they both effect and reflect the international discourse that they describe as internal and active forces.

Hence, the changing fate of different theories has been linked to the changing fate of the EU. This reflects the problem that the *particular* poses for the *universal* assumptions of both these theories of international relations. All are partial theories better at explaining different forces and periods of the integration process. Thus, the assumptions of any of these theories cannot be universally applied. Their claim to universality is also undermined by their failure to account for the particularities of all member states. As this thesis argues in *Chapter 2*, the actions of particular member states have reflected the assumptions of neo-

functionalism, and the actions of others have reflected the assumptions of realism, and thus, the claim to universality of both theories is undermined. As illustrated above, in contrast to neo-functionalist propositions, certain member states may have a particular adherence to the symbols of national sovereignty, and related to this proposition, they may have particular political and governmental discourses that make them more Eurosceptic than others. For example, as the literature examined in *Chapter 2* suggests, British particularities have made it relatively more 'Eurosceptic' than other member states. Hence, as this thesis emphasizes, such particularities make different member states act and behave in accordance to different theories of international relations. For example, the international action of Britain is closer to the assumptions of realism and interdependence theory, while the international action of a majority of Continental European member states has tended to be closer to the assumptions of neo-functionalism.

The tension between these conflicting approaches to European integration also reflects the problem posed by the conceptual dyad of the universal and the particular. That is, neo-functionalism/supranationalism reflects the assumed development of a *universal* European identity, while neo-realist/intergovernmentalism privileges the *particularities* of member states. As *Chapter 6* argues, we can only resolve this tension through deconstruction, that is, by problematizing the underlying assumptions that makes such principles contradictory. It then becomes possible to inscribe them within an 'undecidable' logic that incorporates both without privileging one or the other.

In all, it is evident that the tension between the theoretical assumptions of neo-functionalism and realism reflects the tension in the EU political framework between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. Moreover, the tension

between these theoretical assumptions reflects a tension between the different preferences of different member states, which reflects a conflicting difference in domestic political and governmental discourse, as examined in *Chapter 4*. For example, this thesis argues that British political and governmental discourse supports intergovernmental preferences, while the discourses of Continental Europe tend to support supranational preferences. Thus, we need to examine the domestic politics of particular member states in order to understand the process of European integration. Moreover, to address the specific aims of this thesis, we need to examine the particular aspects of British 'domestic politics' that have opposed and obstructed the political integration of Europe. To this end, the analysis now turns to *Chapter 2* and a literature review of previous accounts of this subject.

Chapter 2

The British Relationship with Europe

Introduction

In contrast to the *universal* theories of European (political) integration described in *Chapter 1*, this chapter examines previous analyses that have focussed upon Britain's *particular* response to EC/EU political initiatives in the period that culminated in the TEU ratification crisis in 1992-3. These analyses of British-European integration have different aims and theoretical approaches, but they all acknowledge, to varying degrees, that Britain had been a relatively awkward partner of the EC/EU. Although other member states opposed EC/EU particular political initiatives at certain times, they all argue that Britain had posed the most consistent obstruction to the process of European political integration. As the most awkward partner, these accounts consider Britain to have been the most Eurosceptic member state. This chapter begins by examining a major study edited by Stephen George that applies a 'domestic politics' approach to the British relationship with the EC in the period 1973-1990.[1] This is followed by an examination of the key text by George that also serves to update his previous

[1] George, S. (ed.) (1992) *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). pp. 1-29.

work.[2] Finally, an account by Peter Preston is presented that reflects a Marxist 'structure/agency' approach to the subject.[3]

1.0. The domestic politics approach to British European policy

George et al apply a domestic politics approach[4] in an attempt to overcome the failure of orthodox analyses to give primacy to domestic politics. George et al claim that this focus is crucial for explaining the policy preferences of member states.[5] Thus, neo-functionalism is criticized for its simple focus upon the EC level. With regard to the intergovernmental countervailing forces that limit neo-functionalism, George et al propose that a domestic politics approach can provide a broader explanation of politics and policy in the EC because it can incorporate the continuing extent of *diversity* in national practices.[6] Although the EC exists as a framework for achieving common solutions to shared problems, such diversity had continued. EC membership had not led to, or imposed, uniform political and economic structures. Indeed, the continued importance of national governments in EC policy-making ensured the continued importance of divergent national policies. Different economic structures, political traditions, institutional forms all culminated in different patterns of European policy. Hence, EC questions concerning, for example, the conflict between national sovereignty and supranational integration, elicited a different combination of responses in particular member states.

---

[2] George, S. (1998) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
[3] Preston, P. W. (1994) *Europe, Democracy, and the Dissolution of Britain: An Essay on the Issue of Europe in UK Public Discourse*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth).
[4] See also: Bulmer, S. (1983) 'Domestic Politics and European Community Policy-Making', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 21, No. 4, pp. 349-363.
[5] See also: Ibid.
[6] Bulmer, S. (1992) 'Britain and European Integration: of Sovereignty, Slow Adaptation, and Semi-Detachment', in S. George (ed.) Op. Cit. p. 25.

Furthermore, the nature of responses could also vary between policy sectors within each member state.[7]

Similar to realist propositions, George et al argue that EC policy-making was dominated by the member states. However, they criticize the realist characterisation of the national interests of the states. Contrary to realism, member states did not simply pursue rationally chosen national interests. Adopting a pluralist critique of realism, they claim that the behaviour of states was determined by domestic politics in the sense that policy was the outcome of a *political process* rather than the result of a *rational calculation*.

George et al claim that the realist representation of British European policy as a simple rational and calculated strategy ignores the complexities of the political process:

> ... The 'realist' assumptions that underlay much of the analysis of the EC based upon intergovernmental perspectives, such as frequently appear in the Press, give the impression that national negotiating positions represent a unified and reasoned calculation of what constitutes the national interest, and that the various positions taken up in negotiations are all part of a well-worked-out strategy. This ... is far too simple an explanation, and therefore necessarily misleading. Governments have a vested interest in presenting their positions as coherent and rational, but the truth is that they represent the outcome of a domestic political process more than they do the outcome of a process of reasoning.[8]

George at al argue that a domestic politics approach is a necessary starting point for establishing a broader understanding of politics and policy in the EC. Thus, the aim is to examine British European policy in the hope that it will contribute to the cumulative understanding of the policies of all member states. To achieve this

---

[7] Ibid.
[8] George, S. (1992a) 'Conclusion', in S. George (1992) Op. Cit. pp 206-207.

broader understanding, a comparative analysis is required, and thus, the domestic politics approach needs to be applied to all other member states.[9]

Rather than assuming that government policy is the simple result of important exogenous European and international developments, it is held that Britain's 'particular' economic and political relationship with the world system was mediated by its national political system.[10] As Bulmer asserts:

> Britain's role in the EC cannot be understood fully by a mere account of the activities of successive governments. The forces underlying government policy must also be examined. *British politics matters*.[11]

In many respects, Bulmer believes that this was a standard interpretation for Britain because of the history of party-political differences over European policy. However, two points are emphasised. First, Britain was unique in relation to the other larger member states because of its continued aversion or scepticism towards integration. This contrasted with continental member states: for example, in the former Federal Republic of Germany, a broad consensus had existed amongst the two major party blocks for thirty years. Second, the party political debate had a close relationship with other political forces, such as public opinion and interest groups.

As a consequence of these two factors, Bulmer claims that the British government had sought to play a 'gatekeeping role' in controlling British relations with the EC.[12] However, it is also emphasised that such a centralising role was not always possible because policy was also affected by the attitudes of interests groups, public opinion, political parties, and local government, as well as the interests of

---

[9] Ibid. p. 207.
[10] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 2.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid. p. 3.

Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Furthermore, Bulmer argues that the policy of central government could not be assumed to be a coherent and integrated whole: the policies of both Labour and Conservative governments had reflected different ministerial responsibilities and interest group sensitivities.

1.1. The historical context of British-European relations

Bulmer emphasises the importance of the historical context of the British relationship with the EC. As he observes, many analysts regard British European policies to have been the product of a failure to adjust to the changed circumstances of the post-war period. Most historical interpretations suggest that, even if British economic decline was established at the turn of the Century, it was not until much later that attention was given to its causes. For example, Hanreider and Auton observe a 'cognitive lag' in the British foreign policy elite: policy-makers had failed to recognise the new post-war era of two superpowers, nuclear arsenals, and realigned world economic forces.[13] They argue that this failure was expressed in the continuity in policy through both Labour and Conservative governments.

As examined below, Tom Nairn and Preston argue that such attention to national economic decline was not forthcoming because the British ruling class was outward-looking, and thus, its success within the global system was perfectly compatible with national decline. Indeed, similar to Nairn and Preston, many historical accounts suggest that the British response to economic decline was not

---

[13] Hanrieder, W. and G. Auton (1980*) The Foreign Policies of West Germany, France and Britain*. (Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey). pp. 179-80. See also: Blank, S. (1978) 'Britain: The Politics of Foreign Economic Policy, the Domestic Economy, and the Problem of Pluralistic Stagnation', in P. J. Katzenstein (ed.*) Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States*. (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press). pp. 89-137.

only slow, but also flawed in terms of addressing the British national interest. Such historical accounts have argued that Britain's aberrant European policy reflected this aberrant and flawed economic strategy. For example, Stephen Blank argues that Britain's failure to become involved in the process of European integration was the result of a form of 'imperial overstretch'.[14] To retain the British standing in international politics, and despite adverse economic circumstances, such policies as maintaining extensive military commitments were pursued which exacerbated pre-existing relative economic decline. By contrast, participation in the process of European integration would have confirmed Britain's 'descent from power'.

Such arguments support Christopher Hill's proposition that 'Britain is a society in which historical thinking is particularly important and prominent'.[15] However, Bulmer emphasizes that 'historical determinism' should not be overstated because there had been changes in British European policy,[16] even though they had tended to be reactive.[17] In due course, Bulmer develops a more refined, discriminating approach to the impact of historical influences upon the British relationship with the EC. Following the differentiation developed by Hill[18], he attempts to avoid historical determinism by differentiating between various historical influences that he identifies as having a significant impact upon the British European policy. In due course, and as will now be described, he differentiates between major elements of continuity and influences that had given way to change.

---

[14] Blank, S. (1978) Op. Cit. p. 89.
[15] Hill, C. (1988) 'The Historical Background: Past and Present in British Foreign Policy', in M. Smith, S. Smith, and B. White (eds) *British Foreign Policy: Tradition, Change and Transformation*. (London: Unwin Hyman). pp. 24-5.
[16] See: Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 5.
[17] See: Ibid.
[18] See: Hill, C. (1988) Op. Cit. p. 33.

1.1.1. Continuity in British European policy

As will now be examined, Bulmer identifies four British 'continuities'[19]: First, national sovereignty, second, pragmatic foreign policy and opposition to political integration, third, the perception of the US relationship to European security, and fourth, broader economic and political interests.

(i) National sovereignty

Bulmer observes that discussions of the relationship between Britain and the other member states of the EC in the post-war period have identified two recurring and interrelated themes: the British preoccupation with the issue of national and parliamentary sovereignty, and thus, its preference for intergovernmental co-operation rather than supranational integration. He observes that the greatest continuity in British views could be found on the question of national sovereignty. Before 1973, Bulmer asserts that British involvement in European organisations can be judged by this criterion alone.[20] With regard to central government, Geoffrey Edwards observes that both major British political parties had been preoccupied with national sovereignty as a principle to be cherished or as an instrument of control. Moreover, civil servants - whatever their own views - had been long-attuned to the sensitivity of the issue for their political masters.[21]

Bulmer identifies many historical explanations for why the question of sovereignty had been of such importance to Britain: first, the continuity of institutions since the English Civil War; second, former world-power status; third, the successful

---

[19] See: Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 8-14.
[20] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 8.
[21] Edwards, G. (1992) 'Central Government', in S. George (ed.) (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 66-7.

avoidance, as an island, of full-scale invasion; fourth, the position of having 'stood alone' in 1940 together with the prestige gained as a victor; fifth, the myth of parliamentary sovereignty; sixth, pride in national identity as an aversion to 'homogenization' by European social integration, and seventh, popular loyalty to the Crown.[22] Such a diversity of origins may help explain why sovereignty was so important to Britain.

(ii) Pragmatic foreign policy and opposition to political integration

Closely related to this British defence of sovereignty was the pragmatism of British foreign policy. Due in part to isolation from the upheavals of continental history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, successive British governments failed to recognise the powerful *political* attractions of European integration experienced by other continental states. Hence, Britain displayed an aversion to the perception of European integration as a political process. For Britain, national interests and political integration were perceived as opposites. In contrast, the other large EC member states made much of the grand ideals of European union and still managed successfully to incorporate national interests in their vision.[23]

Indeed, Britain was assertive and proactive about economic benefits but defensive and reactive about political costs. For example, the Thatcher Government influenced the EC agenda towards the deregulation and liberalization of the internal market in the SEA, and then attacked the aspects of the programme that had political implications. This strategy had been evident ever since the debates about membership.

---

[22] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 9.
[23] Ibid. p. 11.

(iii) The perception of the US relationship to European security

In 1950, Churchill declared that Britain's interests lay in being the point of intersection of three separate circles of influence: the relationship with the US, the Commonwealth, and Europe. This 'three circle doctrine' has been described as 'the last explicit conceptual framework for British foreign policy'.[24] However, it is evident that the British 'special relationship' with the US and the relations with Europe were intertwined.[25] Britain aimed to guarantee its own security in a European context by ensuring US involvement, for example, in NATO. Thus, for Britain, participation in European integration might have risked decoupling the US defence guarantees by demonstrating European self-sufficiency. Regardless of the validity of this fear - and it must be noted that, in the 1950s, the US themselves wanted British participation in European integration in order to promote European unity - it meant that Britain consistently conflicted with French conceptions of European integration because it envisaged a more active role for the US in defence policy.[26]

(iv) Broader economic and political interests

Related to the previous point, Britain was not willing to confine itself to a European sphere of economic and political interests. Although the extent of global influence had declined since the 1940s and early 1950s when Britain was still a major force, traditional maritime concerns and imperial interests were slow to

---

[24] Tugendhat, C. and W. Wallace (1988) *Options for British Foreign Policy in the 1990s*. (London: Routledge). p. 2.
[25] On the British 'special relationship' with the US, see for example: Aldrich, R. J. (1998) 'British intelligence and the Anglo-American "special relationship" during the Cold War'. *Review of International Studies*, Volume 24, No.3. pp. 331-51.
[26] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 11-12.

disappear.[27]Broader international interests included nuclear arms, the role of sterling, and the defence of the Bretton Woods monetary system. As Hill asserted as late as 1988:

> Britain's own demography, financial system, trading needs and political contracts are now so diversified that a falling back into European parochialism is hardly an option.[28]

Similar to Britain's broader foreign and security concerns, Bulmer argues that Britain's broader economic and political interests obstructed its commitment to European integration throughout the post-war period, whether it was its refusal to participate in supranational integration in the 1950s or its rejection of the notion of 'fortress Europe' in the context of the completion of the internal market.[29]

1.1.2. Change in British European policy

(i) British defence policy

Traditionally British European policy had attempted to maintain domestic security by playing the continental powers off against each other. However, at the end of the Second World War, Britain rapidly adapted to the two-bloc system and involved the US in assuring peace on the continent. Although this change was to become a new continuity in the form of transatlantic defence arrangements, it represented a rapid change in policy that undermines any generalizations of 'cognitive lack'.[30]

---

[27] Ibid. p. 12.
[28] Hill, C. (1988) Op. Cit. p. 29.
[29] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 12.
[30] Ibid. p. 14.

(ii) British-commonwealth relations

Until the 1960s, British relations with the Commonwealth had a significant impact upon British European policy. However, they gradually declined to a residual level. Thus, whilst Britain still did not confine its interests to the European sphere, its relationship with the commonwealth rarely constrained its European policy.[31]

In sum, Bulmer argues that British European policy had comprised elements of continuity and change. The 'givens' had constrained the British role in Europe since 1945, whilst other factors had declined in importance. In addition, Bulmer emphasises that, although global circumstances were continually changing, a number of continuing features of Britain's EC membership originated in its pre-history: first, the reluctance or aversion to relinquishing national sovereignty despite the 'realities' of economic interdependence, second, Britain's slow adaptation to EC membership, and third, the unwillingness to confine foreign policy to the European arena. For Bulmer, these themes collectively amounted to British 'semi-detachment' in the context of the EC.[32]

1.2. The British 'semi-detachment' from Europe

Simon Bulmer identifies a succession of difficulties in the post-war period that reflected a 'fraught' relationship between Britain and the process of European integration.[33] First, Britain refused to join the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Second, Britain failed to take seriously the negotiations leading to the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC). Third, a belated

---

[31] Ibid. pp. 14-15.
[32] Ibid. p. 16.
[33] Ibid. pp. 1-29.

conversion to European integration culminated in two unsuccessful British applications for membership in the 1960s. Fourth, major political divisions concerning accession which followed the third successful application under the Conservative Government of Heath. Fifth, the terms of entry were renegotiated by the Labour Government in 1975, which culminated in their approval by 67 per cent of voters in the June 1975 referendum following a hotly contested campaign. Sixth, there was continual wrangling, especially from 1979 to 1984, between Thatcher's Conservative Government and the other member states over the high level of British net contributions to the EC budget. Seventh, following the EC's approval of important reforms in the 1986 Single European Act (SEA), Thatcher gave outspoken opposition to the development of a 'European super-state', especially if it was to further challenge British sovereignty. Eighth, four Cabinet ministers resigned over European issues in the period 1986-90.[34] Finally, there were the circumstances surrounding the replacement of Thatcher as Prime Minister at the end of 1990.[35] As Bulmer asserts, '(A)gainst this background it is scarcely surprising that the United Kingdom continues to be regarded as a 'semi-detached member of the European Community'.[36]

Bulmer claims that the initial group of members of the EC, and most of those who became members later, had clear positive political reasons for establishing or joining the EC. In contrast, Britain was a late and opportunistic member with a European policy based upon *pragmatism* rather than *principle*. Every other member state (except perhaps Denmark) had fundamental political needs that were satisfied by participation in supranational integration. However, Britain was reluctant to participate in this process because it lacked any equivalent political

---

[34] These were Michael Heseltine (1986), Nigel Lawson (1989), Nicholas Ridley (1990), and Sir Geoffrey Howe (1990).
[35] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 1-2.

motivation. Moreover, the motives of the original six member states were regarded with suspicion as seeking to re-establish some form of Holy Roman Empire, recalling religious divisions of the past.[37]

However, although reservations continued in relation to supranational integration, Bulmer emphasizes that Britain had to support European integration, but only because its independent capabilities had declined. Thus, participation was perceived negatively as an expression of the failure of its independent line. That is, Britain viewed participation as a defeat. As Bulmer explains, Britain was no longer able to play the role of a superpower, much of the British-US 'special relationship' was upheld to continue the public impression of Britain's greatness. Britain had also experienced a decline in its share of world trade in manufacturers and in its relative position in Western Europe in terms of GDP. The value of the Commonwealth as a diplomatic resource had also declined. Moreover, Britain's international standing was diminished by changes in the international arena that had affected its key diplomatic resource, its defence commitment. Changes in superpower relations and the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe led to the questioning of the level of conventional commitments and, more fundamentally, suggested a re-evaluation of the reliance upon defence commitment as a diplomatic resource.[38]

Bulmer also observes that British objectives had included achieving European security and outlets for trade - both of which proved possible in the short term without supranational integration. An idealistic political commitment would have been conceived as a negative step: a questioning of British independence in

---

[36] Ibid. p. 2.
[37] Ibid. p. 17.
[38] Ibid. pp. 17-18.

international politics. In the early years, there was also a reluctance to participate in what Britain conceived as a Catholic or Christian Democratic based movement towards integration.[39]

Thus, despite European integration assuming a core position in the international role of Britain, Bulmer argues that there was a reluctance to embrace this within the innermost circles of the Thatcher Government and within its Labour predecessor. As a result, governmental policy gave little rhetorical support for European integration. Nonetheless, Bulmer claims that it is important to distinguish between rhetoric and reality: European integration *had* become important to Britain because many of the other reference points of British policy were in doubt and, with the moves towards global regionalism in the international system, a policy of isolation was unrealistic.[40] This observed 'reality' of global regional pressure for British-European integration is congruent with the predictions of neo-functionalism and those advanced by Preston below. However, in contrast to these positive predictions, Bulmer also observes that the continuing influence of historical negative factors was reflected in the failure of the Thatcher government to embrace European integration.

In general, Bulmer asserts that successive British governments had found it difficult to engage effectively with the EC. The disposition to 'semi-detachment' was the product of a strong institutional logic permeating the political system, economic markets, and public administration.[41] During the post-war period, this was expressed by the British preference for intergovernmental solutions rather than federal or supranational strategies, a position affirmed by Margaret

---

[39] This is reflected in the Conservative Party's failure to work with the European People's Party in the European Parliament. (Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 17.)
[40] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 18.

Thatcher's 'Bruges speech'.[42] The consequence was a British pragmatism towards the development of the EC that conflicted with the expectations of the mainland members.

1.2.1. The policy preferences of British Central Government

Edwards[43] claims that, although EC integration was generally advancing smoothly at the level of the machinery of central government, the British government remained reactive and nationalistic. He also argues that, with varying degrees of intensity, both major political parties in Britain were divided over Britain's participation in the EC. An extension of the competence of the EC and/or an increase in its authority tended to be viewed as a zero sum game: what 'they' had won, 'we' had lost.[44]

Moreover, Britain was rarely able to set the agenda, to provide long-term blueprints and shorter-term leadership that could have won support from others. Edwards observes that Britain was a 'good' European on a range of issues[45], and he argues that it is perhaps beside the point that such issues were close to its own interests. For Edwards, the overall impression is that Britain reacted negatively to the initiatives of others, with agreement usually only at the last minute. However, he emphasizes that such a negative characterisation of British policy should not be exaggerated:

---

[41] Ibid. p. 29.
[42] See: George, S. (1992b) 'The European Community in the New Europe', in C. Crouch and D. Marquand (eds) *Towards Greater Europe*: *A Continent without an Iron Curtain*. (Oxford: Blackwell). p. 53; George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 254.
[43] Edwards, G. (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 64-90.
[44] Ibid. p. 67.
[45] See: Ibid.

> ... the point is less that Britain has its own national interests to pursue - all members have their own interests to pursue and do so with vigour - but that British Governments seem to have such a strong tendency to misjudge the policies and objectives of their partners in the Community, especially their commitment to political integration.[46]

This thesis argues that such 'misjudgements' were the consequence of a divergence in political and governmental discourse between Britain and Continental Europe, as developed in *Chapter 4*.

1.2.2. The policy preferences of British political parties

Nigel Ashford[47] claims that the two major political parties in Britain responded to European integration in a way that reinforced the semi-detached image. Three factors explained this response. The first factor was the adversarial nature of British politics: the convention was for opposition parties to oppose the policies of the government, even while behaviour in government may have reflected a high degree of continuity. This contrasted with the more consensual nature of politics evident in Continental countries such as Germany. Second, there were considerable intra-party divisions on the issue that hindered the articulation of clear positions.[48] Third, European integration posed a threat to the 'ideological self-images' of these parties.

---

[46] Ibid.
[47] Ashford, N. (1992) 'The Political Parties', in S. George (ed.) (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 119-148.
[48] With regard to the divisive impact of the issue of European integration upon the Labour Party, see also: Baker, D. and D. Seawright (1998) A 'Rosy' Map of Europe? Labour Parliamentarians and European Integration', in: Baker, D. and D. Seawright (eds) *Britain For and Against Europe: British Politics and the Question of European Integration*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press). pp. 57-87; Wilde, L. (1994) *Modern European Socialism*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth). pp. 31-33. In relation to the Conservative Party, see also: Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994) 'The Parliamentary Siege of Maastricht 1993: Conservative Divisions and British Ratification', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 47, No. 1, pp.37-60; Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1993) 'Whips or Scorpions? The Maastricht Vote and Conservative MPs', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 46, No. 2. pp. 151-166; Baker, D., I. Fountain, A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1995) 'Backbench Conservative Attitudes to Europe', *The Political Quarterly*, Volume 66, No. 2, pp. 221-233, and Ludlam, S. (1998) 'The Cauldron: Conservative Parliamentarians and European Integration', in: Baker, D. and D. Seawright (eds) Op. Cit. pp. 31-56.

According to Ashford, the Conservative Party presented itself as the embodiment of the national interest and claimed that Conservative governments helped maintain Britain as a significant world power. Advocacy of European integration would undermine these claims because it required acceptance that some short-term national interests would have to be sacrificed for broader and more long-term interests. It would also require an acceptance that, even under the Conservative Governments, the British capacity to maintain sovereignty in global affairs was now severely diminished.[49] In contrast, the basic theme of the Labour Party had been the national and parliamentary road to socialism. The EC was perceived to threaten both the goal, socialism, and the means, parliamentary sovereignty. Thus, full acceptance of the EC required a re-examination of the ideological principles of both main parties.

1.3. The European perception of Britain[50]

As a consequence of its broader global interests, George et al indicate that the rest of the EC had a negative perception of Britain. In political terms, it was perceived that Britain had put the US before the EC, and thus, that it attempted to use its position in the EC to increase US involvement in political matters.[51] Similarly, in economic terms, Britain wanted to serve its broader global economic interests by trying to involve external forces, such as the US and Japan.[52] As observed below, Preston describes this aberrant British position as 'dual parasitism'.

---

[49] Ashford, N. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 120.
[50] See also: Pappamikail, P. B. (1998) 'Britain Viewed from Europe', in: Baker, D. And D. Seawright Op. Cit. pp. 206-221.
[51] Bulmer, s. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 21-2, George, S. (1992a) Op. Cit. p. 61.
[52] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 12-3, George, S. (1992a) Op. Cit. p. 32, 59-60.

The study also observes that Britain's reputation of semi-detachment reflected its aberrant defence of national and parliamentary sovereignty, and thus, of an intergovernmental approach to European integration. In addition, the British political culture supported a more pragmatic approach to foreign policy. Moreover, differences in political culture exacerbated the tension between Britain and the rest of the EC because they led to misjudgements, misinterpretations, and thus, suspicion from both sides. It is a principal aim of *Part II* of this thesis to improve our understanding of this obstructing conflict in political and governmental discourse.

Furthermore, it is emphasized that Britain joined a European Community that had already been in existence for over twenty years. The original members had developed rules and ways of working together during that period, and both these factors contributed to Britain's reputation for being an 'awkward partner'. The rules were not favourable to Britain as a new member[53], and Britain had much to learn about the existing methods of working together.[54] Additionally, the European perception of Britain as a semi-detached member was heightened by the tone adopted in negotiations, particularly under Wilson and Thatcher. For example, adversarial and nationalistic rhetoric was used in the re-negotiation of the terms of British entry (1974-5) and in the negotiations over the size of British contributions to the Community budget (1979-1984). As George suggests:

> Both Wilson and Thatcher spoke as though the issues under discussion were not problems for the EC as a whole, to be mutually and amicably resolved, but as though there was a battle between Britain and the 'Europeans', who were trying to cheat the British and who had to be put in their place by firmness and determination to protect the national interest.[55]

---

[53] For example, Britain was disadvantaged by both the domination of the budget by the CAP and the system devised for funding the budget.
[54] See: George, S. (1992a) Op. Cit. p. 202.
[55] Ibid.

For George et al, such behaviour cannot be explained merely as the reflection of the personal dispositions of such Prime Ministers. Rather, it was the result of a British *political process* that reflected a plurality of influences. This chapter will now turn to the two general conclusions of their examination of this process.

1.4. Variations in adaptation within British domestic politics to EC membership

The study by George et al concludes that Britain did adapt to EC membership. A learning process was experienced at all levels of British government and politics. However, this adaptation varied between actors. Against the steady adaptation at the technical administrative level, politics adapted more slowly. As George asserts:

> The whole basis for British political debate has rested on the ideas of national sovereignty and the superiority of British political institutions. It took tremendous effort to get the British public to approve membership of the EC, because of a lack of any sentiment of 'Europeanism'; and the leaders of the main parties (with the exception of the Liberals) made no effort to inculcate such attitudes. The evolution of opinion was therefore slow.[56]

Neill Nugent observes that public opinion gradually became more favourable to the EC over a long period of time[57]. However, Ashford observes that the process caused much friction within the political parties.[58] Party leaders moved carefully to hold their parties together. The slow evolution of opinion within major parties and the public constrained party leaders and contributed to their rather negative and anti-EC tone within EC policy debate. Adaptation also varied according to policy

---

[56] Ibid. p. 203.
[57] See: Nugent, N. (1992) 'British Public Opinion and the European Community', in S. George (ed.) (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 172-201.
[58] See: Ashford, N. (1992) Op. Cit.

area; the less high-profile and politically sensitive the sector, the more smoothly British policy adapted to working in a Community manner.[59]

1.5. British domestic politics as a plural and complex process

The second conclusion is that British European policy was the result of a *political process* reflecting a *plurality* of influences upon domestic politics. Thus, the image of a 'semi-detachment' can only be explained by disaggregating the concept of 'Britain'. For example, there was an active process of bureaucratic politics before policy was formulated [60] which decided the British government's stance on an issue. In this process, the view of the Foreign Office may have prevailed or sometimes the less 'synoptic' view of the Treasury.[61] During Thatcher's premiership, the Treasury prevailed more frequently because she suspected that the Foreign Office was too 'pro-EC'.[62]

This second conclusion counters the image presented by the British Government that it had tight control over British relations with the EC. This study suggests that it proved increasingly difficult for successive governments to play the 'gatekeeper' role and prevent the process of European integration from dissolving their control. For example, various local authority associations, and some individual local authorities, had developed direct links with Brussels,[63] and there were increasing links between British pressure groups and their European counterparts.[64] Within political parties, direct links were forged with European counterparts below the

---

[59] See: George, S. (1992a) Op. Cit. p. 204.
[60] See: Edwards, G. (1992) Op. Cit.
[61] See: George, S. (1992a) Op. Cit. pp. 30-63, 205.
[62] Ibid. p. 205.
[63] See: Preston, J. (1992) 'Local Government and the European Community', in S. George (ed.) (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 104-118.
[64] Philip, A. B. (1992) 'British Pressure Groups and the European Community', in S. George (ed.) (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 149-171.

level of leadership. This led to a distinct evolution of opinion in some parts of each of the two major parties, while other sections remained relatively insulated. This made party management much more difficult.[65] British public opinion also evolved, which owed little to any strong leadership by political parties. Thus, both within their parties and the electorate, party leaders found that the European issue had come to bind them rather than being controlled by them.[66]

Moreover, the study observes that Parliament became increasingly concerned about its lack of control over EC legislation and demanded more effective scrutiny procedures. The increasing amount of EC law also significantly eroded sovereign parliamentary control over national law. Without increased powers over the increasing body of EC law, Parliament could become marginalised in its primary legislative function.

2.0. A re-assessment of Britain's 'awkward partnership' with Europe

In 1998, George[67] provided a re-assessment of Britain's reputation as an 'awkward partner' that extended his previous (independent) studies through to the defeat of the Major Government in the 1997 General Election.[68] These studies aimed to provide an 'overview of the field' or 'presentation of the record'. That is, in contrast to his previous domestic politics approach, they attempted to provide a basic narrative *account* of Britain's awkwardness rather than a detailed analytical *explanation*. However, George accepts that is not possible to completely separate

---

[65] See: Ashford, N. (1992) Op. Cit.
[66] See: Nugent, N. (1992) Op. Cit.
[67] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit.
[68] The previous study (his second edition) examined the period leading up to the beginning of 1994. See: George, S. (1994) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Second Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

'account' from 'explanation', and he informs us that the elements of explanation that he emphasizes are 'political'.[69]

George also indicates that this re-assessment would be his definitive account of this subject because it might not be accurate to describe Britain as an 'awkward partner' in the future. Despite such optimism, this re-assessment confirmed his previous conclusion that Britain had an aberrant 'pragmatic' approach to European integration, and was conceived as an awkward partner by other members because it put practical achievements and policy before institutional questions:

> For Britain institutional questions are secondary and get in the way of practical achievements. Institutions and procedures should be modified pragmatically as they prove unequal to the tasks required of them.[70]

For example, as John Pinder observes, the British Stresa paper 'was seen as a model of British pragmatism'.[71] As for the British Fountainebleau Paper, the emphasis was very much upon practical achievements rather than institutional reform.[72] Moreover, Britain conceived that such practical achievements required an emphasis upon policy. Thus, whilst for the other member states, institutional reform was the central issue in giving impetus to the Community, for Britain, institutional reform would amount to no practical achievement. Rather, practical achievement required institutions to be subservient to policies.[73]

George also argues that little changed in the relationship between the British Government and the rest of the EC as a result of Major's premiership.[74] He

---

[69] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 1.
[70] Ibid. p. 176.
[71] See: Pinder, J. (1985) 'Pragmatikos and Federalis: Reflections on a Conference', *Government and Opposition*, Volume 20, No. 4, pp. 473-4; George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. pp. 179-180.
[72] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 177. See also: pp. 155-59, 177. For a published copy of this paper, see: H. M. Government (1984) 'Europe - The Future', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 23, No. 1, September, pp. 73-81.
[73] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 177.
[74] Ibid. p. 272, 274.

observes that John Major began his premiership with the aim of putting Britain at the heart of Europe, but it ended with his government as isolated as Thatcher's had ever been. The most common explanation for Major's failure is that, with a small majority in Parliament[75], he chose to accommodate the Eurosceptic elements within his party rather than confront them.[76] With a diminishing parliamentary majority[77], Major made concessions to the Eurosceptic position, such as fighting the 1994 elections to the European Parliament (EP) on a similar 'anti-Brussels' platform as Thatcher had employed in 1989.

George acknowledges the significant effect that internal party management had upon the Major Government. The scale and intensity of rebel Conservative activity between 1992 and 1997[78] was very significant in terms of parliamentary behaviour and publicity, and it increased in salience as his majority diminished. However, he argues that it was a combination of factors that frustrated John Major's aim of putting Britain at the heart of Europe. One significant was the 'personal factor'. Here, George claims that Major's positive attitude towards the EU was gradually eroded by what he perceived as the 'bad faith' of other European leaders. Major felt that he was frequently let down by the other leaders (especially the German Chancellor), and he became increasingly disillusioned with the political games that they were prepared to play.[79] Another significant factor was the British Government's view of the nature of the EU. Here, George observes continuity between Thatcher's and Major's vision of the EU. For example, this continuity is

---

[75] John Major came to power in June 1992 with a majority in Parliament of 21. See: Rallings, C. and M. Thrasher (2000) *British Electoral Facts 1832-1999*. (Aldershot: Ashgate). Table 2.01, pp. 67-8.
[76] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 272.
[77] See, for example: Wood, S. (1999) 'The British General Election of 1997', *Election Studies*, Volume 18, No. 1, pp. 142-147.
[78] See: Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994); Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1993) Op. Cit, and Baker, D., I. Fountain, A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1995) Op. Cit., Ludlam. S. (1998) 'The Cauldron: Conservative Parliamentarians and European Integration', in D. Baker and D. Seawright (eds) *Britain For and Against Europe: British Politics and the Question of European Integration*. (Oxford:Clarendon Press). pp. 31-56.

evidenced by a comparison of Major's article in *The Economist*[80] with Thatcher's Bruges speech.[81] George claims that it is possible that the Major government did have a coherent and positive vision for the future of Europe, and that this vision, rather than short-term considerations of party management, informed the positions that it adopted in EU negotiations.

In this sense, Britain's awkwardness had reflected the differences between British and Franco-German visions of Europe. As George observes, Britain's awkwardness could be differently interpreted as the result of a conflict between British economic liberalism and Franco-German state-interventionism.[82] Hence, George suggests that European integration was obstructed by *differences* in vision between Britain and Continental Europe rather than by British *shortcomings*. From such a perspective, it can be observed that the British position became more central to the EU throughout the Major premiership.[83] That is, the project of European union was becoming increasingly closer to the British liberal-economic vision. Relatedly, it was evident that the British Government was having an increasingly significant impact upon the shape of the European union.

Similar to the neo-functionalist approach examined in *Chapter 1*, and the 'structure-agency' approach by Preston examined below, George also examines the structures underlying the British relationship with Europe. Despite the *appearance* of little change in the British relationship with the rest of Europe, George emphasizes that changes did take place in the underlying fundamentals of the relationship. As he explains, deep structures were changing, even if the

---

[79] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 273.
[80] Major, J. (1993) 'Raise Your Eyes, there is a Land Beyond', *The Economist*, 25 September, Volume 328, No. 7830, pp. 23-4.
[81] See: George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 254-255.
[82] Ibid. p. 273.

surface relations remained static.[84] For George, these changes suggested that Britain's awkwardness might not be inevitable - that Britain had at least the opportunity to be perceived as a less awkward partner.[85]

With regard to European political integration, George claims that such underlying changes affected three factors that contributed to Britain's reputation an as awkward partner. The first factor was the domestic political constraints on the positions that British Governments could adopt.[86] Here, George observes a vicious cycle of British Euroscepticism. As British governments had not made any significant attempt to convert the public to Europeanisation, the result was a Eurosceptic political culture. As a consequence, both leading parties were easily led into anti-EC rhetoric in the pursuit of votes. In turn, this use of anti-EC rhetoric tended to reinforce attitudes - based upon generations of imperialism - of Britain looking to the wider world and treating Europe with disdain, of negative attitudes to the French that became embodied in popular culture, and, since the early Twentieth Century, of fear and mistrust of the Germans.[87]

Second, British negotiators demonstrated an awkwardness in handling the terminology of the political debate that had already developed among the original members.[88] As George argues, British politicians and officials experienced difficulties in adjusting to the ways of the EC. For example, one difficulty was the difference between the British adversarial political system, in which the government could usually get its own way, and the system of compromise to which European politicians are accustomed. Coalition governments are the norm

---

[83] Ibid..
[84] Ibid. p. 275.
[85] Ibid.
[86] See: Ibid. pp. 275-277.
[87] Ibid. pp. 275-6.

in most continental member states, and thus, their politicians expect to have to compromise and are adept at it. Thatcher never adapted her approach to this way of working, and Major found the cutting of deals increasingly tiresome and frustrating.[89] Moreover, George argues that British politicians and officials had difficulty in presenting the British national interest in a way that did not seem to be against the common EC interest, whereas the French were adept at wrapping pursuit of their national interest in a 'communautaire' vocabulary.[90] George claims that the British adoption of the term 'subsidiarity' in 1990 was evidence of some adjustment.

Third, the natural instinct of many leading British political figures was to look first to the US for partnership, and to regard with suspicion what were perceived as the federalist designs of Continental Europe.[91] For George, although often overstated, this factor should not be ignored.[92] George claims that federalism was seen not only as a threat to British sovereignty, but also as an attempt to undermine US hegemony in the capitalist world, and as part of an overall conception of the EC that was inherently protectionist against the rest of the world.[93]

2.1. A less awkward future?

George also examines changes in the other side of the British-EU relationship, that is, changes in the EC. For George, although an obviously awkward relationship with the EC/EU could be observed in later years of the Major

---

[88] See: Ibid. pp. 278-279.
[89] Ibid. p. 278.
[90] Ibid.
[91] See: Ibid. pp. 279-280.
[92] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 279. To help prevent such an overstatement, George emphasizes that Heath deviated from this tradition. (See: George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. pp. 137-165, 280.)
[93] See: George, S. (1989) 'Nationalism, Liberalism and the National Interest: Britain, France, and the European Community', *Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics*, No. 67, (Glasgow).

Government, developments in the EU suggested that the British position would not need to change too much to become central to the European debate in the future.[94] These developments also suggested that Britain was no longer as awkward as previously conceived. As observed above, at the behest of the British Government, the EU project was becoming increasingly intergovernmental and liberal-economic rather than 'functionalist/federalist' and social democratic. For example, the problems for ratification of the TEU throughout Europe exposed public scepticism about the federalist aspirations of some leaders; Mitterrand's European project seemed to have failed, and Gaullist nationalism was beginning to reassert itself.[95]

Moreover, enlargement increased the number of states that held positions upon European integration that were close in many respects to that of Britain. Enlargement also complicated alliance formation, which had already become more complex as a result of the increase in qualified majority voting (QMV) to more areas of policy. Although the Franco-German alliance remained powerful, it could no longer dominate proceedings. As other members were often unhappy about the extent to which the French and Germans attempted to dominate, they would have welcomed a more co-operative tone from Britain.[96]

With the electoral defeat of Major in 1997, the Labour Party returned to power with a large majority in Parliament.[97] For a Government that was not hindered by the problems that afflicted Major, such as small and decreasing majority in Parliament,

---

[94] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 276.
[95] Ibid. p. 281.
[96] Ibid.
[97] In 1997, the Labour Party returned to power and won its biggest majority in Parliament ever (178, or 179 if the Speaker is counted) and with a record number of seats (419 out of 659). In direct contrast, the Conservative Party was reduced to their lowest number of seats since 1906. See: Rallings, C. and M. Thrasher (2000) Op. Cit. Table 2.01, pp. 67-8, and Wood, S. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 142.

George argues that the underlying situation was now promising for putting Britain at the heart of the debate about the future of Europe.[98] However, as will now be examined, Preston is less confident that such British agents could successfully crack the British mould from within (or would even want to).

3.0. Global structural change and British agent response

Preston[99] develops a 'structure-agency' approach to examine the British response to global structural change, and in particular, to the consequent pressure for European integration.[100] That is, he examines global structural change and British agent response. He predicts that British-European integration is inevitable as a consequence of the 'complex change' defined by major global events in 1989-91. In turn, British-European integration would invoke a more progressive approach to national development in Britain.

Over the centuries, Preston argues that the British 'official' ideology, and the liberal-individualist political culture that it occasioned, consistently obscured the 'reality' of the ruling class pursuing its own trans-national interests rather than progressive national economic and democratic development. Since British 'public discourse' reflected this distortion of reality, no effective demands for change were made. Therefore, the British public had not demanded a more positive approach to European integration, which Preston argues would represent such progressive political change. Moreover, following David Marquand, Preston argues that liberal-individualism does not provide a space for a genuinely social sphere or community

---

[98] George, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 281.
[99] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. Preston describes his text as an 'essay' to indicate that it is 'rather more speculative than the conventions of academic discourse usually allow'. (Ibid. p. vii.)
[100] Ibid. p. 202.

that would be the natural public arena for developing a more progressive discourse.[101]

Adopting a humanist Marxist approach, Preston's analysis incorporates the work of such political theorists as Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn who have attempted to move away from classical Marxism and its economic determinism, economistic notion of class, and 'class struggle' focus.[102] His analysis also incorporates development theory and the theories of international relations developed by Andrew Linklater[103] and Susan Strange.[104] In accordance with these theories, Preston argues that we must examine the actions of any particular agent group, such as a state-regime, by examining the wider sets of structures within which they operate.[105] Any holistic analysis of the actions of a nation-state must examine the *trans-national* structures within which it is located. That is, we must focus upon the dynamic interaction of structures and agents.[106]

3.1. British obstructions to development and change

As will now be described, Preston identifies a number of interrelated explanations for the British failure to develop progressive political-economic and political-cultural structures and respond effectively to change.

---

[101] Ibid, p. 35. See also: Marquand, D. (1991a) *The Progressive Dilemma*. (London: Heineman). pp. 216-220.
[102] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 6.
[103] See: Strange, S. (1988) *States and Markets.* (London: Pinter).
[104] See: Linklater, A. (1990) *Beyond Marxism and Realism: Critical theory and International Relations.* (London: Macmillan).
[105] See: Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 19, 84, 130-1, 180, 203, 208.
[106] Ibid. p.131.

3.1.1. The British political culture

Preston describes how the phases of development in Britain had produced particular political cultural structures in its polity[107], and how these established patterns of structures obstructed endogenous change in Britain.[108] Incorporating the structural analyses of Nairn[109] and Marquand[110] in particular, Preston claims that the existing structures of the British polity were fixed in place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He argues that this pattern of structures still shaped the political experience in Britain. The underlying form of this pattern of structures had never been questioned or overturned by crisis, revolution or war, and thus, there had been a failure to achieve the political breakthrough that may have established a progressive 'European-style' social democratic developmental state.[111] He emphasizes that such development in Britain was necessary to arrest long term relative national decline, and his essay contributes to the existing Marxist literature upon this issue.[112]

3.1.2. The ideology of liberal institutionalism

Preston describes 'official' ideology as the way in which a political-cultural system presents itself.[113] It is the ideology of the elite that is employed to legitimate and order extant social patterns. It is expressed in particular concrete institutional

---

[107] See: Ibid. pp. 7-20.
[108] See: Ibid. pp. 20-32.
[109] See: Nairn, T. (1988) *The Enchanted Glass*. (London: Hutchison Radius).
[110] See: Marquand, D. (1988) *The Unprincipled Society*. (London: Fontana), and Marquand, D. (1991a) Op. Cit.
[111] See: Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 21, 31-33.
[112] See, for example: Gamble, A. (1990) *Britain in Decline: Economic Policy, Political Strategy and the British State*. (London: Macmillan); Hirst, P. Q. (1989*) After Thatcher*. (London: Collins); Leys, C. (1989) *Politics in Britain: From Labourism to Thatcherism*. (London: Verso); Marquand, D. (1988) Op. Cit.; Pollard, S. (1982) *The Wasting of the British Economy*. (London: Croom Helm), and Smith, K. (1987) *The British Economic Class*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin).
[113] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 21.

arrangements and carried by the distinctive patterns of the life of the elite. Preston argues that the British official ideology had obstructed the endogeneous change necessary to overcome relative national decline because it celebrated continuity, duty and obedience, as well as the 'particularity' of Britain.[114] In sum, it was a strategy of deep dissimulation that kept Britain lodged within early times.[115]

Following Alastair MacIntyre[116] and Marquand[117], Preston plays particular attention to the role played by the ideology of liberal-individualism in obstructing change in Britain. As a result of this liberal-individualist position, Preston claims that the British political class ensured relative economic decline and democratic deficiencies by 'choking off' the European social-democracy informed by the modernist project.[118] In place of the liberal celebration of the market by the British political classes, Germany and Northwestern Europe successfully secured extensive development by establishing the type of developmental state that was theorized via social democracy.[119] In sum, the liberal-individualist posture is advanced as the root cause of Britain's relative economic decline and democratic deficit because it obstructed such social democratic development in Britain. For Marquand, Nairn and Preston, Britain required a developmental state to arrest its long-term relative decline[120], and European social democracy, informed by the modernist project, is advanced as the necessary basis for this developmental state.[121]

---

[114] Ibid. pp. 21-22.
[115] See also: Nairn, T. (1988) Op. Cit. pp. 93-8.
[116] See: MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory.* (London: Duckworth).
[117] See: Marquand, D (1988) Op. Cit.
[118] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 31.
[119] Ibid. p. 18.
[120] Ibid. p. 20.
[121] See, for example: Ibid. p. 15, 20, and Nairn, T (1988) Op. Cit. pp. 373-391.

In accordance with (Perry) Anderson[122], Preston claims that the project of European integration embodied the ideas and options of European social democracy. Thus, as a consequence of its liberal stance, the failure of the British class to respond to the European social democratic project was reflected in its failure to embrace European integration. Henceforth, Preston assumes that British relative economic decline would have been reversed if Britain had embraced European integration because this would reflect an acceptance of the European project of social democracy.

3.1.3. The strategies of the major political parties

Preston claims that Britain failed to develop progressive political parties as a result of its political culture of liberal-individualism. Following Marquand, he argues that liberal-individualism advances a sphere of sovereign individuals where order is a matter of political hierarchy or economic marketplace.[123] In due course, the neo-liberalism of the British Right and the top-down statism of British labourism became the only options, neither of which are considered to be effective, progressive, or able to respond to change - as reflected in their failure to embrace European integration.

In the 1980s, Preston describes how the regressive use of liberal principles resurfaced when it was invoked to support the New Right project in response to the collapse of the post-war social democratic compromise (and against Habermasian schemes of democracy[124]). For Preston, the British New Right project was as an authoritarian, intolerant, substantively anti-democratic and failed

---

[122] See: Anderson, P. (1992) *English Questions*. (London: Verso).
[123] Marquand, D. (1991a) Op. Cit. pp. 216-20.

attempt to adjust to continuing British relative decline within the global system. [125] This attempt was made by adopting a project of 'dual parasitism', politically on the USA via the 'special relationship', and economically on the European Community conceived as a loose free trade area.[126] As described below, Preston argues that this project was increasingly challenged by the process of complex change in the global system, and by the process of European integration in particular.[127] Hence, a strategy of 'dilute and delay' was the only available strategy to keep the EC as a mere free-trade area.[128]

Preston argues that the political ascendancy of the British New Right was aided by the parlous state of the British Left.[129] The Labour Party is judged as an historical failure, a failure that allowed the British Conservative Party to become the most successful right-wing party in Europe. With reference to the work of Nairn and Marquand, Preston claims that the Labour Party failed because it offered a specific reading of the modernist project rooted in the late nineteenth century expectations of elite led mass working class action. He also argues that the Labour Party prevented the development of a more progressive alternative party to liberal-individualism by blocking any contribution to political discourse and action from the non-Labour Centre and Left. For Preston:

> The Labour Party's deeply conservative labourist ethos has remained intact and with it their ingrained little Englander suspicion of Europe, and the system has continued to marginalize the contribution of other parties. These essentially defensive stances are unlikely to prove adequate to the challenges of the 1990s.[130]

---

[124] See: Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 29-30, 37, 58, 187-88, 205. See also: R.C. Holub (1991) *Jürgen Habermas: Critic in the Public Sphere*. (London: Routledge).
[125] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 207.
[126] See: Ibid. pp. 133, 196, 207.
[127] Ibid. pp. 130-5, 196-7.
[128] Ibid. p. 197.
[129] Ibid. p 207.
[130] Ibid. pp. vi-vii.

This argument may explain why the proliferation of new social movements apparent in Continental Europe was absent in Britain. This theme is discussed in *Chapter 7* of this thesis.

3.1.4. National and parliamentary sovereignty

As also identified by George et al above, Preston observes that both British Conservative and Labour governments had obstructed European integration in defence of British national and parliamentary sovereignty.[131] With reference to the work of Nairn, Preston describes the historical episodes that lodged such principles into British political and public discourse. He describes the pre-modern phase of parliamentary absolutism that was established in the English Civil War (1640-88) in the seventeenth century; the invention of the 'official' nationalism by the British political classes in response to the demands of republican democracy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and finally, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century period of 'high Victorianism/Edwardianism' that established the institutional arrangements and political and public discourse of contemporary Britain.[132] The significance of these key principles, and their development, are discussed further in *Part II* of this thesis.

3.1.6. 'Official' British nationalism and the *trans*-national interests of the British ruling class

Relevant to this thesis, Preston examines the significance of British nationalism in the British obstruction to European integration. Similar to this thesis, Preston

---

[131] Ibid. pp. 8-9, 23-27,115, 130-133.
[132] See: Ibid. pp. 6-18.

argues that British nationalism was 'constructed' in opposition to Continental Europe, and the threat it posed to British economic and political stability. Following Benedict Anderson[133], Preston holds that British nationalism is an invented 'official nationalism' that was constructed and imposed from above. That is, 'Britain' was a ruling class project occasioned by long hostility to the mainland, and fuelled by the expectations of enhanced material wealth - particularly within the integrated British market and via overseas trade and empire. According to Nairn, in Continental Europe, nationalism was forged to express the conditions of modernity. In contrast, nationalism in Britain was forged to pre-empt and politically arrest these conditions.[134]

Thus, in contrast to Continental Europe, Preston argues that the British ruling class invented the 'British nation' to further its own economic interests rather than to pursue the modernist project and national development. Rather than focussing upon national development, Preston argues that the British State read and controlled trans-state flows to maximize the advantages, external and internal, of the British ruling class.[135]

In Britain, Preston emphasizes that British national development had been obstructed because the prevailing archaic and regressive liberal-individualist tradition successfully served the interests of the British ruling class. For Preston, the British political-economy was as an archaic and outward-looking mercantile capitalism dominated by a south-eastern trading/commercial/financial bourgeoisie

---

[133] See: Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities*. (London: Verso). The term 'official nationalism' was first employed by Hugh Seton-Watson to describe the nationalism invoked by the policies of Eastern European regimes. See: Seton-Watson, H. (1977) *Nations and States. An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press). p. 148.
[134] Nairn, T. (1988) Op. Cit. p. 135.
[135] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 19.

that regarded Britain generally as 'provinces' which were available for exploitation but not crucial to their world-system role.[136] Thus, following Tom Nairn[137], Preston argues that all diagnoses of British decline which were cast in national terms[138] were missing a crucial point: the British ruling class was outward-looking and its success within the global system was perfectly compatible with the decline of the 'national unit'.[139]

As a consequence of the success of the official nationalism, Preston argues that British public discourse on European integration had been cast in terms of 'gain/loss' and 'problem/opportunity'. This is similar to the proposition of George et al above that Britain had perceived any move towards further European integration as a defeat of 'us' and a victory for 'them'. Preston argues that this 'gain/loss' and 'problem/opportunity' perception became common in British public discourse for two reasons. First, it reflected the 'personalised-nationalism' of the British ruling class whereby 'we' were taken as one mind, and one set of interests, all of which had to be necessarily, inevitably and obviously asserted against 'them', in this case, the rest of the EC. Second, British public discourse perceived the world through the 'distorting frame' of the ideology of liberal-individualism, which obscured the 'reality' of the ruling class pursuing its own trans-national interests rather than national development.[140]

In all, following Nairn, Preston argues that, since the late nineteenth century, the official liberal-individualist ideology of the British ruling class had successfully obstructed any change to the British polity in order to preserve its own

---

[136] Ibid. p. 18.
[137] See: Nairn, T. (1988) Op. Cit.
[138] See, for example: Leys, C. (1989) Op. Cit., and Pollard, S. (1982) Op. Cit.
[139] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 18.
[140] Ibid. p. 19, 130, 135.

transnational interests. As a consequence of its success, the underlying form of British political discourse had never been questioned. It had survived the crisis of the First World War; the crisis in the 1930s when it was rescued by Keynes; the crisis of the Second World War, as well as the extensive social welfare reforms of the post-war period.[141]

3.2. Overcoming the British obstructions to change[142]

Preston conceives Twentieth Century Britain as an archaic, pre-democratic and 'half-modern'[143] liberal oligarchy. Following Nairn and Marquand, he argues that the necessary condition for British modernization is the pursuit of republican democracy and the establishment of a developmental state. Thus, Preston looks for ways to develop such progressive change in Britain. To this end, he adopts the approach to structurally occasioned 'stasis/decline' developed by Nairn. In contrast to the work of many other Centre/Left critics of extant circumstances,[144] Nairn argues that it is not recipes that are needed but changes in power structures. This argument strongly recalls the conclusion of development theory that 'exhortation plus recipes' are useless. [145] Rather, the dynamics of structural change must be examined and the possibilities for progressive agent response identified. Indeed, previous work in developmental theory by Preston has come to

---

[141] Ibid. p. 21.
[142] Here, it must be emphasized that, since the time of Preston's analysis and the period examined by this thesis, there have been changes in Britain that affect this problem, and thus, its possible solution. As discussed in *Chapter 7* and the conclusion of this thesis, changes in British political and government discourse have been invoked 'from within' since the electoral defeat of the Conservative Party by 'New' Labour in 1997. For instance, New Labour has demonstrated a relatively more positive approach to European integration, and its provision of a 1997 referendum upon Welsh and Scottish devolution led to the establishment of the Welsh and Scottish assemblies, and thus, to regional constraints upon the power of national government and parliament.
[143] See: Nairn, T. (1988) Op. Cit. p. 154.
[144] Those identified are: Hirst, P. Q. (1989*)* Op. Cit.; Marquand, D (1988) Op. Cit.; Pollard, S. (1982) Op. Cit., and Smith, K. (1987) Op. Cit.
[145] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 19.

this conclusion[146], and thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that it is advanced and confirmed by his analyses of British-European relations.

Following this conclusion, Preston searches for sources of power that might change the British system-configuration. For Preston, this exploration concerns two problems. First, and with particular regard to the extant labourist incompetence and democratic deficits in Britain, there is the question of how to take power away from the ruling class in order to usher in a group with a developmental strategy. Second, there is the problem of the existing theoretical focus on Britain as a 'bounded unit'. How Preston addresses these two problems will now be examined.

3.2.1. Potential agents of change

With regard to the first problem, as Preston and his commentators have argued above, the British liberal minimum state is incapable of acting as an agent of economic and political development. In addition, as for Nairn, the Labour Party is written off as a possible agent of change. The labourist Left, which dominated the Centre/Left in Britain, is viewed as both imaginatively and practically crippled.[147] Moreover, Preston claims that the Labour Party has actually obstructed change. Both the liberal-individualist political culture, and the labourism it occasions, has blocked the development of a more progressive Centre/Left politics that could produce the necessary political and economic change in Britain.

Furthermore, as Nairn observes, the British ruling class is outward looking and its success within the global system is perfectly compatible with the decline of the

---

[146] See, for example: Preston, P. W. (1987) *Rethinking Development*. (London: Routledge).

'nation unit'. As the British ruling class has never been focused on British development in the past, Preston does not believe that they will suddenly begin to now. Preston and his commentators also emphasize that this problem is made worse because the ruling class is very entrenched in Britain: 'The ruling class is not declining, it adjusts, and the already secondary do the declining'.[148]

Preston concludes that we should stop searching for agents of change within Britain. Rather, he predicts that the modernist project will be inevitably imposed upon the British political classes from 'outside'. Citing Sarah Baxtor, Preston is confident that 'The mould is more likely to crack from without, than to be broken from within'.[149] He argues that the dynamics of European change has advanced the modernist project in the shape of the project of European integration. It is proposed that this European project is the only potential agent of change in view for Britain.

3.3. Complex change and British agent response

Despite all the obstructions to change in Britain that he observes, and despite his proposition that the British ruling class has successfully contained any demands for change since the late nineteenth century, Preston predicts that change in Britain is now inevitable as a consequence of the contemporary process of global structural change. To elucidate upon this global structural change, Preston develops an analysis of complex change that owes much to his reading of development theory in the light of the neo-episodic theory of Gellner.[150] Following

---

[147] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 19-20.
[148] Ibid. p. 18.
[149] Baxter, S. (1991) *New Statesman and Society*. 1 November. Volume 4, No. 175, p. 23.
[150] See: Gellner, E. (1964) *Thought and Change*. (London: Routledge).

Gellner, Preston approaches the analysis of the contemporary developments in Europe as:

> ... an episode of complex change to received structures and discourses which we can attempt to elucidate by deploying the methods of classical social science in the expectation that we have a rough idea of its endpoint; that is, some sort of unification.[151]

From such an analysis of complex change, Preston argues that 'we can understand those periods when inter-related change takes place in the economy, society, polity and culture of a people'.[152]

In his analysis of complex change, Preston claims that the political-economic and political-cultural structures of the post-Second World War were overthrown by events that took place between May 1989 and December 1991. He proposes that the crucial task of social science is the elucidation of these ongoing complex dynamics of political-economic and cultural change that are believed to be remaking Europe.[153]

For Preston, this complex change was defined by a sequence of four events. First, the EC was moving towards a more integrated political economy (with the notion of federalism variously invoked). Second, the EFTA periphery of the EC was rapidly moving to establish eventual membership. Third, East Central Europe was quickly embracing mainstream European ideas. Fourth, the USSR/CIS was in the process of both internal reform and bi-polar withdrawal.[154] This complex change replaced the Cold War statis that had previously been governed in Western Europe by the US ideology of 'Atlanticism'.

---

[151] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 179.
[152] Ibid. p. 178.
[153] Ibid. p. 208.
[154] Ibid. p. 20.

Preston believes that this complex dynamic of change is invoking extensive and far-reaching changes to Europe and the global system. As a result of this complex change, he argues that the present pattern of states in Europe is clearly in the process of dissolution.[155] With reference to the key structures of power in the global system identified by Strange, Preston argues that, in Europe:

> ... the pattern of inter-group relations constructed with reference to these structures over the post-war period is now changing rapidly. New configurations of these structures are being made. New relationships of agent groups are being made. New patterns of understanding might thereafter be expected to emerge.[156]

3.3.1. Responses to complex change in Europe

Preston believes that the Continental European project of European integration is a positive and effective response to global structural change. In contrast to Britain, Preston describes how the rest of Western Europe gave a rapid, coherent and rational response to the sequence of changes of 1989-91 that defined such complex change. This response took the form of a re-affirmation of the ideal of European unity, a 're-emphasis' of the drive towards an 'ever closer union' which had animated its founding fathers, and which had found partial expression in the 1985 SEA. [157]

However, Preston describes how the British state-regime reacted in horror as their very convenient enemy, and with it their 'Altanticist' sense of their world and their domestic legitimating ideology were undermined, to be replaced by such notions of 'European union'. Preston argues that European integration was a threat to the British state-regime because it required a re-ordering of British power structures

---

[155] Ibid. p. 180.
[156] Ibid. pp. 179-80.
[157] Ibid. p. 3.

that entailed an ideological reorientation from Atlanticism and US hegemony to 'Europeanism'. Furthermore, British agents feared that the new EC settlement would have an increasingly German image because Germany is the major economic power of Europe and for many Continental members, the model of a successful political economy.[158]

Moreover, following William Wallace[159], Preston observes that members of both major British political parties were concerned that European integration would threaten parliamentary sovereignty, and thus, open up some fundamental questions about the quality of British democracy and the structure of the British state.[160] Wallace argues that these questions would challenge most sections of mainstream British political opinion because:

> ... insistence on Westminster sovereignty became the fundamental principle of ... Unionism, conservatism, and nationhood ... (and) most of Labour's leaders share the same sense of 'English exceptionalism', of unquestioning faith in the democratic character of the British parliament.[161]

For Wallace, the questioning of these assumptions would result in the unravelling of the whole construct, and thus, the British state-regime would be faced with not only a constitutional crisis, but also a crisis of national identity.[162]

Hence, the British state-regime feared that further European integration would invoke a constitutional crisis that would destabilize its position of power and undermine its liberal ideas and interests. As Preston argues:

---

[158] Ibid. p. 146.
[159] Wallace, W. (1990) 'Europe: Cry Havoc', *New Statesman and Society*, 9 November, Volume 3, No. 126, pp. 16-17.
[160] Ibid. p. 17.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.

> ... whilst the programme of European Community union is clearly a coherent and rational response to structural change (,) it is one which threatens quite directly the grip on power of the UK ruling groups who would be faced with democratizing their essentially pre-democratic oligarchic polity.[163]

In addition, it was also evident that global structural change, and the further European integration that it occasioned, would also threaten the British official nationalism that has also served to maintain the position and interests of the British ruling class. As a consequence of changes to the trans-system, the idea of 'Europe' would come to challenge the idea of the 'nation'[164], and thus, the official construct of 'Britishness'.

As a result of these fears, Preston claims that a new British State posture on Europe began to be discerned which found its first formulation at Maastricht. This was the posture of 'dilute and delay' in the hope of arriving at what in effect would be nothing more than a loose free-trade area.[165] Thus, the British state-regime could continue to pursue its liberal economic interests without incurring any threats to its political stability.

In sum, Preston claims that the British state-regime and its interests were threatened by the process of complex change and the European project that it invoked. However, the success of its anti-European stance was aided by the success of the official British liberal-individualist ideology that fooled the British public into supporting this position which was contrary to its own political and economic interests. That is, this position served the transnational interests of the ruling class but obstructed national development. This ideology successfully obstructed the development of a more positive political discourse that could

---

[163] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 203.
[164] Ibid. p. 186.
[165] Ibid. p.3, 203.

replace the strategy of denial that plagued the major political parties as well as public discourse. Furthermore, Preston's examination of British historical development suggests that the British ruling class will fight hard to maintain the official nationalism that secures its status and its interests.

3.3.2. The inevitability of change in Britain

Nevertheless, for Preston, it is clear that the dynamics of change in Europe will have a major impact upon the British polity. As Britain is absorbed into the European community, the construction of a new British political discourse is deemed inevitable. Preston finds it impossible to believe that the British ruling class can contain the new pressures for change, and thus, he predicts that British political structures and discourses will have change impressed upon them in the future.[166] He makes this prediction despite his observation that the official ideology of the British ruling class has successfully contained pressures for change in the past, and that, as a result, the underlying form of the present British political discourse has never been questioned before.

However, Preston predicts that recent global structural change will transform the patterns of power that flow through Britain. 'Institutionally embodied power' will move upwards to the new trans-national EC system, and downwards to the newly empowered British regions.[167] As Marquand suggests, Britain can expect power to shift away from Westminster and towards Brussels and the British regions. [168] In due course, power will be taken away from the British ruling class and given to

---

[166] Ibid. p. 175.
[167] Ibid. p. 144.
[168] See: Marquand, D. (1991b) 'The Fudge Manufacturers of Maastricht. Why its Time to Switch from Economics to Politics, from Technocracy to Democracy', *The Guardian*, 3 December. p. 19.

agents that can usher in a more progressive developmental strategy and discourse in Britain.

Preston argues that it is the new trans-national EC system that holds the key to positive change within Britain. He predicts that the global dynamics of change will necessarily occasion a positive response to European integration within Britain. As a consequence, he argues that Britain will have finally embraced the Continental European modernist project and its social democratic goals that are deemed necessary for effective British development.[169] Still, Preston emphasizes that the final outcome, or new position of relative stability, of this particular episode of complex change will take many years to achieve. He argues that the establishment of new identities and compromises is likely to be a difficult and lengthy process.[170]

4.0. Summary

All the accounts examined in this chapter are similar in the sense that they all observe that British-European political integration in the post-war period was obstructed by a British preoccupation with national and parliamentary sovereignty, as well as its broader global political interests and its 'special relationship' with the US. As a consequence of these factors, they argue that there was a strong British preference for intergovernmentalism. They all observe the British tendency to support initiatives for European *economic* integration but oppose initiatives for *political* integration. Additionally, they all observe the Continental European preference for the supranational (or trans-national) integration of Europe, and

---

[169] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 208.
[170] Ibid. pp. 186-7.

thus, for economic *and* political integration. It is also implied that this divergence in interests between Britain and Continental Europe reflected a divergence in political culture. For example, the accounts by George and Preston observe a divergence between British liberalism and Continental European social democracy. Thus, it is suggested that Britain opposed initiatives for European integration that embodied the conflicting social democratic ideas and interests of Continental Europe.

George et al suggest that British political culture supported a more pragmatic approach to foreign policy than Continental Europe. Moreover, they suggest that such differences in political culture exacerbated the tension between Britain and the rest of the EC because they led to misjudgements, misinterpretations, and thus, suspicion from both sides. As indicated, a principal aim of *Part II* of this thesis is to develop our understanding of this obstructing conflict in political and governmental discourse.

To different degrees, all accounts also suggest that there were significant historical reasons for Britain's aberrant European policy. They observe such reflects Britain's historical failure to respond to change and develop an effective strategy for national development in response to the consequent national economic decline. For example, Bulmer argues that British government policy remained outdated and was slow to adapt to changing circumstances because British government still acted as if Britain held its former position of grandeur. He also argues that British foreign policy tends to be reactive in nature. Preston also accepts that British government upheld an outdated position, but argues that the

British ruling class did not want to adapt this stance because it benefited their trans-national interests that were perfectly compatible with national decline.

It is therefore apparent that the accounts of Britain's particular relationship with Europe undermine the universal assumptions of the different theories of international relations examined in *Chapter 1*. That is, they all suggest that different member states conceive international relations in different ways. More precisely, they all imply that Britain confirmed realist propositions because it demonstrated an intergovernmental conception of European integration, but that Continental European member states confirmed neo-functionalist assumptions because they held a supranational conception.

Despite the many similar observations and arguments made by these accounts of British-European integration, there are also many differences between them that reflects a difference in analytical approach. For example, although both Bulmer and Preston argue that it is important to develop a historical context for their analyses, in contrast to Preston, Bulmer makes a significant attempt to avoid overstating historical determinism.

In contrast to Preston, George et al[171] examine both sides of the British-EC/EU relationship. Thus, although both Preston and George suggest that Britain was becoming increasingly closer to the heart of Europe, for George, this is because of changes on each side. He argues that the British position did not need to change too much to become central to the European debate in the future because this position had become more central to the EU throughout the Major premiership. As also proposed by this thesis, George suggests that the EU was moving away from

the broader political, supranational and social democratic project that was originally instigated by Continental Europe and becoming increasingly narrower, liberal-economic and intergovernmental. Nevertheless, he argues that European integration continued to be obstructed by the broad contrast in political styles and languages of Britain and Continental Europe. Thus, in contrast to Preston, George suggests that European integration had been obstructed by *differences* between Britain and Continental Europe rather than by British *shortcomings* in relation to a superior Continental European ideal. This will be supported in this thesis.

Although this change in vision of the EU was predominantly the result of developments in the EU, George also suggests that the British Government was having a significant impact upon the form of the European union. That is, the EU was moving away from its original goals to meet the Thatcherite liberal-economic and intergovernmental preferences of Britain. In sum, contrary to the assumptions of Preston, George suggests that the project of European union could not be upheld as a social democratic ideal that Britain should pursue. He also suggests that Britain could no longer be described as *the* aberrant and awkward partner of Europe.

In contrast to George, Preston is less confident that the New Labour Government, even with its vast majority, could successfully crack the mould from within, or would even want to. Rather, Preston predicts that change in Britain will only be externally occasioned as a consequence of ongoing global structural change. George et al also recognise that these external structural changes and pressures were undermining Britain's awkward position, but emphasize that various *internal* agents in Britain were already responding to such external developments, and as

---

[171] That is: George, S. (1998) Op. Cit., and all the contributors to: George, S. (ed.) (1992) Op. Cit.

a consequence, Britain had already begun to accept European integration. In contrast to Preston, internal British agents are seen by George et al as having been slowly adapting to European integration rather than maintaining a complete opposition to it.

In his analysis, Preston argues that the British official ideology and liberal-individualist political culture obstructed the development of the social democratic ideas and options upheld in Continental Europe. In due course, similar to George, he suggests that Britain opposed the project of European integration because it was perceived to embody these Continental European social democratic conceptions. For Preston et al[172], British relative decline was caused by the British obstruction to the social democratic ideas of the modernist project of Continental Europe. As the project of European integration embodied these ideas, then it is predicted that British-European integration will overcome Britain's flagging development.[173] However, as described above, George's observations suggest that, at the behest of Britain, the project of European union no longer embodies this modernist project of social-democratic development. If this is the case, then Preston is misguided in his support for this project.

To elucidate, the Marxist-structural accounts by Preston et al tend to equate the project of European integration with the Continental European modernist project of social democratic development. However, at the behest of the British Government, and as George observes, the project of European integration is moving closer to the position advanced by British liberal-individualism. In due course, in contrast to the original goals of the Continental European project of European integration, the EU has remained more intergovernmental than supranational, and thus, closer to

the assumptions of realism than the predictions of neo-functionalism. Moreover, in contrast to the original project, it is also evident that the EU has remained more economic than political. This economic position has satisfied the British liberal-individualist stance that objects to the political integration of Europe in three interrelated senses. First, in accordance with the British defence of national and parliamentary sovereignty, the development of an open economic market must not spill-over into the development of a *supranational* political community. Second, in accordance with the British liberal-individualist principle of the minimum state, the EU must not develop a supranational social democratic state apparatus that would infringe upon individual liberty and freedom. Third, even on an intergovernmental basis, British liberal-individualism rejects the social democratic tendencies of the political initiatives of the EU.

Conclusion

With regard to the theories of international relations examined in *Chapter 1*, it is apparent that the assumptions and predictions of neo-functionalism are similar to those advanced by Preston. As illustrated, Preston develops a 'structure-agency' approach to examine the trans-national context of British-European relations and the dynamics of complex change. As functionalism is the alter ego of structuralism[174], then it seems logical that Preston's structural approach would advance similar structural-deterministic and teleological assumptions as neo-functionalism. Indeed, congruent with the deterministic and teleological scriptures of functionalism and neo-functionalism, Preston assumes that the actions of agents are determined by structural dynamics, and thus, that he can determine

---

[172] That is, Perry Anderson, David Marquand, Tom Nairn, and Peter Preston.
[173] See: Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 5.

and predict 'agent response' to structural change. In addition, it seems logical that these two approaches would arrive at similar conclusions. Thus, in contrast to realism, and congruent to the neo-functionalist prediction of the supranational integration of Europe and the decline in the significance of the sovereign nation-state (and thus, the preference for intergovernmentalism), Preston concludes that a positive British agent response to European integration is now inevitable. However, the structural approach developed by Preston also incorporates those of Linklater and Strange, and thus, in contrast to neo-functionalism, Preston locates Britain within *global* rather than *regional* structures. He thus argues that British-European integration is an inevitable response to global structural change.

Following the structuralist propositions of Strange, Preston claims that analysis of international relations must focus upon the dialectic of structure and agency: received structures shape the actions of agents, and in turn, the actions of agents modify structures. However, despite this proposition, Preston's analysis of 'structural change, agent response' only examines one side of the coin: how global structures shape the actions of agents. He fails to examine how the actions of agents (and in particular, British agents) have affected received structures. For example, as observed above, George suggests that British agents were affecting the direction and form of the European union. Thus, in contrast to Preston, George illustrates that (British) agents affect structure and not just vice versa.

It is also evident that the domestic politics approach by George et al is similar to realism because it emphasizes that member states rather than supranational institutions dominate the process of European integration. However, contrary to realism, George et al argue that the behaviour of member states is not determined

---

[174] Hay, C. (1995) 'Structure and Agency', in D. Marsh and G. Stoker (eds) *Theories and Methods in*

by simple rational and calculated strategies, but rather, policy is the outcome of a complex *political process* that reflects a *plurality* of influences upon domestic politics. Thus, the image of a 'semi-detachment' can only be explained by disaggregating the concept of 'Britain'. Their examination of British domestic politics is hoped to contribute to the cumulative understanding of the policies of the leading member states. Consequently, they emphasize that a domestic politics approach needs to be applied to the other member states in order to achieve a broader understanding of politics and policy in the EC.

In contrast to all the theoretical approaches examined in *Chapter 1* and *Chapter 2*, this thesis examines the significance of the construction of the British identity in the development of the phenomenon of British Euroscepticism. It is argued that the construction of the British identity has involved the negation of Continental Europe and its meanings and options. As this thesis also aims to convince, the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe provides an instructive theoretical framework for such an approach.

In *Chapter 6*, this discourse-theoretical framework will also be employed to overcome the *false universalization* of orthodox approaches to international relations and the *false particularisation* of previous accounts of British-European integration. As observed in *Chapter 1*, and as indicated by the domestic politics approach by George et al above, universal theories of international relations are assumed to be universally true and fail to consider the individual differences or particularities of member states.

Political Science. (London: Macmillan). p. 193.

The opposite problem affects accounts of British-European integration. As Richard Rose claims, 'The tradition of writing about British (or more properly, English) politics is to *assert uniquenesss through false particularisation*'.[175] However, this false particularisation of Britain is often produced against a false universalistion of Continental Europe. That is, there is a 'Eurocentric'[176] tendency to describe 'Continental Europe' as a superior and universal identity. For example, Preston follows the approach developed by Nairn and Anderson, despite acknowledging the criticism by Edward Thompson[177] and others that they 'relentlessly denigrate' British culture in relation to an ideal-typical characterization of the French Revolution[178], and employ a 'bourgeois paradigm' which acts to impose the French experience upon all of Continental Europe and against which British development is compared.[179]

Of course, this perception of a monolithic and *superior* Continental Europe directly contrasts with the British Eurosceptic perception of it as a monolithic and *threatening* 'Other', as examined in *Chapter 5*. However, there is a concern that such an image of Europe can not only be misleading, but that, similar to British Euroscepticism, it can serve to reinforce the discursive divide between 'us' and 'them' that is presently obstructing European integration. As explained in *Chapters*

---

[175] Rose, R. (1991) 'Comparing Forms of Comparative Analysis', *Political Studies*, Volume 39, pp. 446-62. p. 450.
[176] See, for example: Young, R. J. C. (1996*) Torn Halves: Political Conflict in Literary and Cultural Theory*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press), and Young, R. J. C. (1990) *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*. (London: Routledge). This term is explained and examined further in *Chapter 6*.
[177] See: Thompson, E. P. (1978) [1965] 'The Peculiarities of the English', *The Poverty of Theory*, pp. 35-91. Previously published in *The Socialist Register*, 1965.
[178] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 16. On this debate, see also: Nairn, T. (1988) *The Enchanted Glass*. (London: Hutchison Radius). pp. 378-81; Anderson, P. (1987) 'The Figures of Descent', *New Left Review*, No. 161, January-February, pp. 20-21, and Anderson, P. (1992) *English Questions*. Foreword. (London: Verso).
[179] See: Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 16, and Meiskins-Wood, E. (1991) *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism*. (London: Verso). Similarly, Colin Mooers describes a 'normative theory of bourgeois Revolution'. See: Mooers, C. (1991) *The Making of Bourgeois Europe*. (London: Verso).

5, it could reinforce the discursive construction of the limits of the British identity against a Continental European 'constitutive outside'.

The problem that the universal/particular dyad poses for the analysis of international relations is addressed in *Part III* of this thesis. However, the specific focus of *Part II* is the *British* obstruction to political integration. With regard to this focus, as well as to considerations of space, the particularities of other member states are recognised but not examined. Thus, without comparing this part with research upon the other member states, it must be accepted that the reader will inevitably gain an 'unbalanced' conception of European political relations. However, similar to previous accounts of British-European relations, this thesis argues that Britain has been a *relatively* awkward partner of Europe, and it is precisely this observation that prompted this research in the first place.

In sum, *Part II* does not imply that other states, such as Denmark, have not been awkward, but rather, that such observations are outside the confines of this research project. As such, they demonstrate the need for further research in order to produce a comparative analysis that can provide a more balanced picture of European political relations. Therefore, similar to George et al.[180], this thesis argues that such problems of ethnocentricity can be avoided by developing a comparative approach.

It is also acknowledged that Continental European member states to do not have identical political and governmental discourses. For instance, similar to the British tradition of *responsible* and centralized government, French central government

---

[180] See, for example: George, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p 207. This particular reason for a comparative approach is also emphazised by: Dogan, M. and D. Pelsay (1984) 'Comparing to Escape from

'dirigism' indicates a principle of government as custodian of the Rousseauesque 'General Will'. Thus, both Britain and France contrast with the federal system of Germany in which the influence of the Lander indicates a more responsive and decentralized notion of government. (However, in contrast to Britain, France is similar to Germany in that even what we might think of as 'colonial territories' were represented within the French parliament, and certainly the idea of 'Deputies' implies a more popular and responsive notions of representation.)

Despite such differences, and with the exception of Denmark, Continental European member states are equivalent in the sense that they *all have expressed a desire for European political integration and Britain has not*, whether their systems of government are federal (for example, Germany), decentralized (for example, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Spain), or centralized (for example, France). Indeed, although other members have parliamentary traditions as well as strong nationalist identities, and despite the many disagreements between them on specific European policies, the important point is that they still have been willing to 'surrender' these principles to the higher common good expressed by 'an ever closer union', or have not perceived such a unity as a significant threat to them. (It also instructive that it was the Continental European states of Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands that inaugurated the supranational project of European integration in the first place[181], bolstered by the anti-fascist Continental European resistance

---

Ethnocentrism', in *How to Compare Nations: Strategies in Comparative Politics*. (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House), pp. 5-12.

[181] On this Continental European vision of a European political community, see also: Tassin, E. (1992) 'Europe: A Political Community?', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. (London: Verso). pp. 169-192.

movements.[182]) Indeed, it is this difference between Britain and Continental Europe that is of great interest to this thesis.

In sum, in contrast to Britain, these Continental European member states are equivalent in that they are republican and participatory democracies, and thus, they uphold an equivalent primary concern for the defence of *popular* rather than *parliamentary* sovereignty. As examined further in *Chapter 4*, in contrast to Britain, and reflecting their *equivalent* republican notions of citizenship and civil rights, the role of government in these Continental European member states is to defend and respond to the national interest as determined by the majority of their citizens. It is this democratic equivalence between Continental European member states that is signified by such terms as 'Continental European political and governmental discourse' in this thesis.

[182] For example, representatives from nine European countries, excluding Britain, formulated the Declaration of European Resistance Movements in July 1994. See: Ibid. p. 182.

Chapter 3

A Discourse-Theoretical Approach to Political Analysis

Introduction

This chapter examines the discourse theory developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe to be applied within this thesis. This approach combines post-structuralism and post-Marxism[1] with Lacanian Subject theory.[2] With regard to the theory of the Subject in particular, the political philosophy of Slavoj Žižek has had a significant impact upon the development of discourse theory.[3] Žižek combines Lacanian psychoanalytical theory with an anti-essentialist interpretation of Hegel and other classical philosophers to develop a contemporary critique of ideology.[4] He also draws upon some recent trends in critical philosophy.[5] However, the significance of the work of Žižek extends far beyond its affinity with discourse theory. Indeed, an application of the psychoanalytical insights of Žižek to the hypotheses of this research project would require another thesis. Hence, the work

---

[1] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1987) 'Post-Marxism Without Apologies', *New Left Review*, Volume 166, pp. 79-106.
[2] See: Laclau, E. (1990) *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time*. (London, New York: Verso). pp. 5-41, 93-96.
[3] See: Ibid. p. xvi. For further study of the work of Žižek, see for example: Žižek, S. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (London: Verso); Žižek, S. (1990a) 'Beyond Discourse Analysis', in E. Laclau (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 249-260; Žižek, S. (1990b) 'East European's Republic of Gilead'. *New Left Review*. Volume 183, September-October, pp. 50-62, Žižek, S. (1994) *Mapping Ideology*. (London: Verso). See also: Butler, J., E. Laclau and S. Žižek (2000) Op. Cit.; Kay, S. (2003) *Žižek: A Critical Introduction*. (Cambridge: Polity Press); Smith, A. M. (1998) *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*. (London, New York: Routledge). pp. 88, 74-83; Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek*. (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell), and Wright, E. and E. Wright (eds) (1999) *The Žižek Reader.* (Oxford: Blackwell).
[4] See, for example: Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit., Žižek, S. (1994) Op. Cit.
[5] Especially the 'anti-descriptivism' of Saul Kripke, as examined below in *Sections 2.3-4*.

of Žižek will only be invoked when it directly contributes to the development of a discourse-theoretical approach to this specific application.

It is apparent that the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe emerged from the fragmentation of various fields of analysis. The structuralist paradigm - that incorporates much of the literature upon British-European (political) integration - was problematized by the post-structuralist critique of the notion of closed and centred structures. Indeed, the growing emphasis on the 'play of meaning' within 'decentred' structures led directly to Laclau and Mouffe's concept of 'discourse'. Within the Marxist tradition, orthodox notions of structure and structural determination, combined with the crisis of its Leninist legacy, encouraged interest in the open and flexible Marxism of Antonio Gramsci. The consequent development and radicalization of elements of Gramscian theory contributed to the formation of 'post-marxism'.[6]

Post-structuralism and post-Marxism have both tended to focus upon the question of the construction of political and social identity. Here, the rejection of the possibility of a fully constituted and self-enclosed Subject led to the adoption of fundamental psychoanalytical insights from Lacan, emphasising the multi-layered and fragmented character of the Subject at the level of symbolic signification.[7] At this juncture Žižek's reading of Lacan played a significant part in the development of a coherent and instructive theory of discourse. Thus, as this chapter aims to demonstrate, the combination of post-structuralism, post-marxism and Lacanian psychoanalysis should not be considered as strange or accidental: clear lines of affinity exist between them in theoretical viewpoints and analytical foci.

---

[6] See, for example: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. (London: Verso), Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1987) Op. Cit.
[7] See, for example: Laclau, E. (1987) 'Psychoanalysis and Marxism', *Critical Enquiry*, Winter, pp. 330-3.

1.0. What is discourse theory?

The 'discourse theory' applied by this thesis is a context-dependent, historical and non-objective framework for analysing discourses (or discursive formations).[8] Here, 'discourses' constitute symbolic systems and social orders, and the aim of discourse theory is to examine their historical and political construction.

Such basic definitions from the outset are particularly important because of the common misconceptions regarding these terms.[9] As Jonathon Potter observes, 'It is perfectly possible to have two books on discourse analysis which have no overlap in content at all'.[10] Indeed, in accordance to the arguments of the discourse theory of Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek, the *signifier* (sound-image or expression) 'discourse theory' can assume a variety of different and competing *signifieds* (concepts or contents). For example, Jürgen Habermas[11] uses this signifier to describe his own project, reflecting a position opposed to that of Laclau et al. Indeed, the discourse theory of Laclau et al provides a critical response to the Habermasian attempt to ground liberal democracy, modern emancipation and

---

[8] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 12. On this specific definition of 'discourse theory', see for example: Howarth, D. (1995) 'Discourse Theory', in D. Marsh and G. Stoker (eds) *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. (London: Macmillan). pp. 115-33; Howarth, D. (2000) *Discourse*. (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press) pp. 4-5, 101-25; Laclau, E. (1993a) 'Discourse', in R. E. Gooding and P. Pettit (eds) *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*. (Oxford: Blackwell). pp. 431-7, and Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 11-12, 54-77. Here, 'discursive formations' are the articulation of various discourses into a relatively unified whole. For example, liberal democracy is a discursive formation because it consists of a various different discourses that have been articulated in and through hegemonic practices. (Ibid. p. 300).

[9] Due to concerns for space and focus, a detailed discussion of the many different discourse theories and definitions of discourse cannot be developed here. See for example: Howarth, D. (2000) Op. Cit. pp. 1-14; Laclau, E. (1993a) Op. Cit. pp. 431-5, Meinhoff, U. (1993) 'Discourse', in W. Outhwaite (ed.) *The Blackwell Dictionary of Modern Social Thought*. (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell). pp. 164-6; Potter, J. (1996) 'Discourse Analysis', in A. Kuper and J. Kuper (eds) *The Social Science Encyclopedia*. (London, New York: Routledge). pp. 188-9, and Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 2-4.

[10] Potter, J. (1996) Op. Cit. p. 188.

[11] See, for example: Habermas, J. (1984-1987) *The Theory of Communicative Action: Vols I-II.* (Cambridge: Polity Press), Habermas, J. (1990) [1985] *The Philosophical Discourses of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

the reconciling power of reason in the ideal of unconstrained communication.[12] The essay by Peter Preston, examined in *Chapter 2*, pursues this opposing Habermasian position.[13] He argues that the Habermasian model of an open and unconstrained democratic 'discourse-politics' is possible, but that it has been closed to British 'public discourse' because it has been blocked by New Right ideology[14] as well as by British governmental discourse upon societal decision-making.[15]

However, an alternative signifier, 'discourse *analysis*', is also problematic, being commonly applied to the linguistic techniques utilized in descriptions of the different discursive forms used in communication. For example, the account by Peter Anderson and Tony Weymouth that examines 'media discourse' adopts the linguistic techniques of the 'critical discourse analysis' of Norman Fairclough.[16] Although the work of Laclau and Mouffe may encourage such techniques in empirical studies, it is important to emphasize the distinction between such formal linguistic studies and the theoretical propositions of their work.[17]

Confronted with this complication, the different status of the theoretical propositions of Laclau and Mouffe can be determined which also make this

---

[12] As Žižek argues, the problem with Habermas is that he claims that reason, ethics and democracy can be grounded in an ideal speech-act situation. As a consequence, he resorts to an ideological masking of the ultimate failure of the social to constitute an all-encompassing space of representation. (See: Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 1-7; Žižek, S. (1990a) p. 259.) In contrast, Laclau and Mouffe propose that the social is structured by an unrepresentable kernel of negativity, and as a consequence, it fails to provide an ultimate grounding for the forms of reason, ethics and democracy associated with modernity. Hence, rather than giving way to irrationality, nihilism and totalitarianism, Laclau and Mouffe believe that the openness of the social is the very condition for formulating democracy based upon contingent forms of reason and ethics hitherto restrained by the rationalist 'dictatorship' of the Enlightenment. (Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 3-4.)

[13] See: Preston, P. W. (1994) *Europe, Democracy and the Dissolution of Britain: Essay on the Issue of Europe in UK Public Discourse*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth). pp. 29-30, 58, 205.

[14] See, for example: Ibid. p. 205.

[15] See, for example. Ibid. p. 58.

[16] Anderson, P. J. and T. Weymouth (1999) *Insulting the Public? The British Press and the European Union.* (London, New York: Longman) On the critical discourse analysis of Norman Fairclough, see: Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse.* (London: Edward Arnold), Fairclough, N. (1997) *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley).

research project different to those described in *Chapter 1* and *Chapter 2*. As Torfing explains, the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe is neither a theory in the strict sense of a more or less formal set of deductively derived and empirically testable hypotheses, nor a method in the strict sense of an instrument for representing a given field from a point outside it.[18] However, this does not mean that it is devoid of theoretical categories or rigorous techniques. Rather, it means that its theoretical propositions are substantively empty in that they are not organized around a set of substantiated claims. In accordance with the propositions of Jacques Derrida, it means that we should conceive of ourselves as 'bricoleurs' in the sense that we are willing to use existing analytical tools, and prepared to store them for the future if their 'truth value' is seriously questioned.[19]

Hence, as indicated above and applied by this thesis, the theoretical propositions of Laclau and Mouffe constitute a 'theoretical analytic' in the Foucaultian sense of a context-dependent, historical and non-objective framework for analysing discourses.[20] First, they are 'context-dependent' because they are grafted onto other discursive surfaces in terms of theoretical debates in Britain, Europe and the United States. Second, they are 'historical' in the sense that they recognise the 'unmasterable temporality' of the history of which they are set. Finally, they are 'non-objective' because they do not pursue the discovery of a universal truth. Rather, they aim to expose strictly local truths by questioning the totalizing ideological horizons that deny the 'contingency'[21] of the criteria for truth and

---

[17] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 12.
[18] Torfing, J. (1991) 'A Hegemony Approach to Capitalist Regulation', in R. Bertramsen, J. Thomsen and J. Torfing (eds) *State, Economy and Society*. (London: Unwin Hyman), pp. 35-93.
[19] Derrida, J. (1978) [1967] *Writing and Difference*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul). p. 285.
[20] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 12. See also: Dreyfus, H. L. and P. Rainbow (1986) [1982] *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. (Brighton: Harvester). p. 184.
[21] The concept of 'contingency' describes the impossibility of making an object intelligible through the determination of its causes, as well as the notion of 'incompletion' - that is, as if through an accidental event there was a failure to constitute a full identity. Thus, with regard to identity, a social identity is contingent in so far as its conditions of possibility are also its conditions of 'finitude'. (Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 299.) To elucidate, a being or object is contingent in the sense that its essence does not involve its existence. Hence, as social antagonism is constitutive of social

falsity.[22]It is such a 'discourse-theoretical analytics' in the Foucaultian sense that is signified by the signifier, 'discourse theory' in this research.

Similar to term ‘discourse theory’, it is also important to attend to some common misconceptions regarding 'postmodernism'.[23] Preston is sceptical of alternative 'postmodern approaches' to the British relationship with Europe:

> ... postmodernists rest content with the gestural non-discourse of non-progress ... (and) much of the material of postmodernism is expressive of the disheartened intellectuals over the 1980s period of New Right political-institutional dominance. Notwithstanding that many of the particular ideas advanced are thoroughly interesting, the material overall is nonsense. In particular the analyses they would offer in respect of the contemporary British polity are deeply implausible.[24]

Moreover, the term 'postmodernism' is something of a misnomer.[25] Those against it have been irritated by the way that it has slipped into every imaginable theoretical discussion[26], and even supporters of the idea have voiced reservations about the way that it has been used.[27] As David Howarth explains, these doubts are a consequence of the misleading connotations that postmodernism has engendered:

> For some, it is seen as a complete break with modern ideas such as 'autonomy', 'freedom' and 'reason' that emerged during the European Enlightenment. For others, it represents a historical period that comes after modernity. Still others equate post-modernism with the end of epistemology - the theory of knowledge - and thus a relativistic nihilism that rejects all knowledge claims and renders political and ethical commitments redundant.[28]

---

identity, as there is always a 'constitutive outside' that is both the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of any identity, there is a certain 'accidentalness' that is constitutive of identity. See: Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 18-19, Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 51-2.

[22] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 12.

[23] For a broader discussion of the concept of 'postmodernity', see: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 59-61.

[24] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 206.

[25] Howarth, D. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 116.

[26] Callinicos, A. (1989) *Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique*. (Polity Press: Cambridge). p.1.

[27] Rorty, R. (1991) *Essays on Heideggar and Others*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). p. 1.

[28] Howarth, D. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 119.

Moreover, there is a tendency among those broadly unsympathetic to theories which attempt to assess the consequences of postmodernity to dismiss poststructuralist, post-marxist and psychoanalytical theories of discourse as mere theoretical sophistry, having no relevance to the analysis of concrete phenomena. However, this research project aims to demonstrate that discourse theory can provide a new and productive framework for analysing concrete phenomena, events and developments.

1.1. Discourse theory and political analysis

The work of Laclau and Mouffe does not attempt 'system-building', but rather, they develop their theoretical propositions in and through interventions in specific political and theoretical debates. Hence, they provide a guide to 'postmodern theorizing' rather than an all-purpose instrumentalism for social analysis.[29] Nevertheless, as this thesis aims to demonstrate, the advancement of a new type of 'postmodern theorizing' is of great relevance to political research. For instance, discourse theory addresses the fundamental problem of political research that relates to the epistemological underpinnings of social science in general. Traditionally, most political research implicitly operated within a positivist position, emphasizing that through systematic observation, and the generation and testing of hypotheses, it was possible to establish results that were consistent and generalisable across time and space. This was particularly the case for quantitative research given that this approach was strongly associated with the behaviourist position, itself inherently positivistic.

However, the positivist position has become increasingly questioned. As will be explained below, political scientists taking discourse-theoretical positions have

argued that our understanding of the world is discursively constructed. Hence, political concepts and phenomena are discursive constructions, and thus, they can have different meanings in different discourses. For example, previous analyses of British-European integration ignore that member states have different political discourses, and thus, different understandings of democracy and economic development. As this thesis proposes, such differences are pivotal to the explanation of Britain's reputation as an awkward partner of Europe.

A discourse-theoretical approach is also appropriate for this research project because it focuses upon the question of the construction of identity. It can help us understand the tension between the British national identity and the possibility of constructing a new supranational European identity. In sum, as examined below, a discourse-theoretical approach can elucidate how identities are disrupted by dislocation, rearticulated in and through hegemonic struggles, harnessed through the construction of social antagonisms, and 'naturalized' by their claim to universality.

The key analytical and conceptual tools of a discourse-theoretical approach to political research are its three inter-related and mutually conditioned concepts of 'discourse', 'hegemony' and 'social antagonism'. Thus, these concepts as well as their implications for this particular research focus, will now be examined.

2.0. The concept of discourse

Within discourse theory, the concept of 'discourse' tends to substitute for the more traditional concept of 'structure'. Similar to structure, discourse has an explanatory role since it is assumed that social interaction can only be explained in relation to

---

[29] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 13.

its discursive context. However, discourse does not possess the same determining power as the concept of 'structure' because it rejects the idea of an 'organizing centre' that arrests and grounds the play of meaning. In this sense, discourse *informs* rather than *guides* social interaction. Discourse also differs from structure in the way that it affects social interaction. As Torfing explains, it influences the cognitive scripts, categories and rationalities that are indispensable for social action, whereas structure merely operates through prescriptive norms of conduct and specific resource allocations - both of which are discursively constructed.[30]

Congruent to classical transcendentalism, discourse theory assumes that the very possibility of perception, thought and action depends upon the structuration of a certain meaningful field that pre-exists any factual immediacy.[31] However, in contrast to classical transcendentalism, discourse theory assumes the 'historicity' and 'variability' of discourse. That is, transcendental conditions are not purely transcendental, but continuously changed by empirical events. In addition, while the idealist conception of the Subject as the creator of the world is maintained within classical transcendentalism, discourse theory utilizes the notion of structure upheld by Saussurean[32] and post-Saussurean linguistics.[33] The fundamental claim of discourse theory can now be stated: cognitions and speech-acts only become meaningful within certain pre-established discourses, which have different structurations that change over time.[34]

---

[30] Ibid. p. 82.
[31] Laclau, E. (1993a) Op. Cit. p. 431.
[32] See: Saussure, F. (1981) [1959] *Course in General Linguistics*. (Suffolk: Fontana).
[33] Laclau, E. (1993a) Op. Cit. p. 431. For further discussion of Saussurean and post-Saussurean linguistics, see: Culler, J. (1986) *Ferdinand de Saussure*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press); Culler, J. (1988) *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions*. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press); Howarth, D. (2000) Op. Cit. pp. 16-47; Howarth, D. (1995) Op. Cit. pp. 120-1; Laclau, E. (1988) 'Metaphor and Social Antagonisms', in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture.* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education). p. 249-57; Laclau, E. (1993a) Op. Cit. pp. 431-5; Smith, A. M. (1998) Op. Cit. pp. 84-103, and Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 87-99.
[34] Torfing, J. (1999) Ibid. pp. 84-5.

2.1. Discourse and dislocation

A discourse-theoretical approach rejects the orthodox Marxist belief in the possibility of structural determinism. That is, the concept of *discourse* (or discursive structure) replaces the notion of *structure* that was conceived as a fully constituted and objective whole with calculable and predictable effects. As this thesis emphasizes, it is such a concept of structure that undermines the functional accounts of international relations, as well the structural accounts of British-European integration as developed by Preston.

The whole idea of structural determinism is problematized by the discourse-theoretical concept of dislocation. 'Dislocation' refers to the disruption of a discourse by events that it cannot domesticate, symbolize or integrate.[35] It is such dislocation that deprives structure of its determining capacity. In contrast to the Althusserian conception[36], dislocation is a permanent phenomenon in the sense that there is always something that resists symbolization and domestication, and thereby reveals the limits, incapacity and contingency of a discourse. Hence, dislocation continuously prevents the full structuration of the structure. Dislocation is the traumatic event of chaos, crisis, and disorder that ensures the incompleteness and lack of objectivity of the structure. That is, dislocation is the concept of the impossibility of structural determinism. As such, it is the very form of temporality, possibility and freedom.[37]

---

[35] Ibid. p. 301.
[36] See, for example: Althusser, L. (1971) [1969] 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in: L. Althusser (ed.) *Lenin and Philosophy*. (New York: Monthly Review Press), pp. 158-83.
[37] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 41-3.

2.2. The analysis of concrete discourses

There are three focal points that are crucial to the analysis of concrete discourses: the relations of 'difference' and 'equivalence'[38]; the workings of different kinds of 'overdetermination'[39], and the unifying effects of 'nodal points'[40].

2.2.1. The relations of difference and equivalence

In their theory of equivalence and difference, Laclau and Mouffe claim that the rule of the logic of difference is limited by the absence of a fixed centre, which renders complete totalization, and thus, closure, impossible. The partial fixation of meaning within discourse produces an irreducible 'surplus of meaning' which escapes the differential logic of the discourse in question. The expansion of the 'logic of difference' is prevented by the lack of a deep foundation in a fixed centre capable of revealing the full essence of all identities. However, it is also prevented by the presence of an alternative 'logic of equivalence' which collapses the differential character of social identity by means of expanding a signifying 'chain of equivalence'.

Ferdinand de Saussure had previously distinguished between 'syntagmatic' and 'associative' (or paradigmatic') relations: a syntagmatic relationship between linguistic units is established by the *linear* combination of linguistic units into sentences. An associative or paradigmatic relationship is established by the substitution of one word in the sentence for another word with the same meaning or function. Hence, as illustrated in *Figure 1* below, for the British hegemonic discourse of neo-liberalism, the following line of words, 'Britain is under threat

---

[38] See: Laclau. E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 127-134.
[39] See: Ibid. pp. 97-105.

from European integration', is an example of a *syntagmatic* combination of words. However, the substitution of 'European integration' for 'bureaucracy', 'collectivism', 'corporatism', 'federalism', 'nationalisation', 'protectionism', 'regulation', 'socialism', 'statism', 'trade unionism', and so forth, is an example of a *paradigmatic* relationship between different words that share an 'identical something' or sameness in the sense that they are all considered to represent 'social democracy'. That is, they can be substituted for one another because they have the same meaning or function within the British hegemonic discourse of neo-liberalism. Hence, *difference* exists in the diachronic succession of the *syntagmatic* pole and *equivalence* exists at the *paradigmatic* pole.[41]

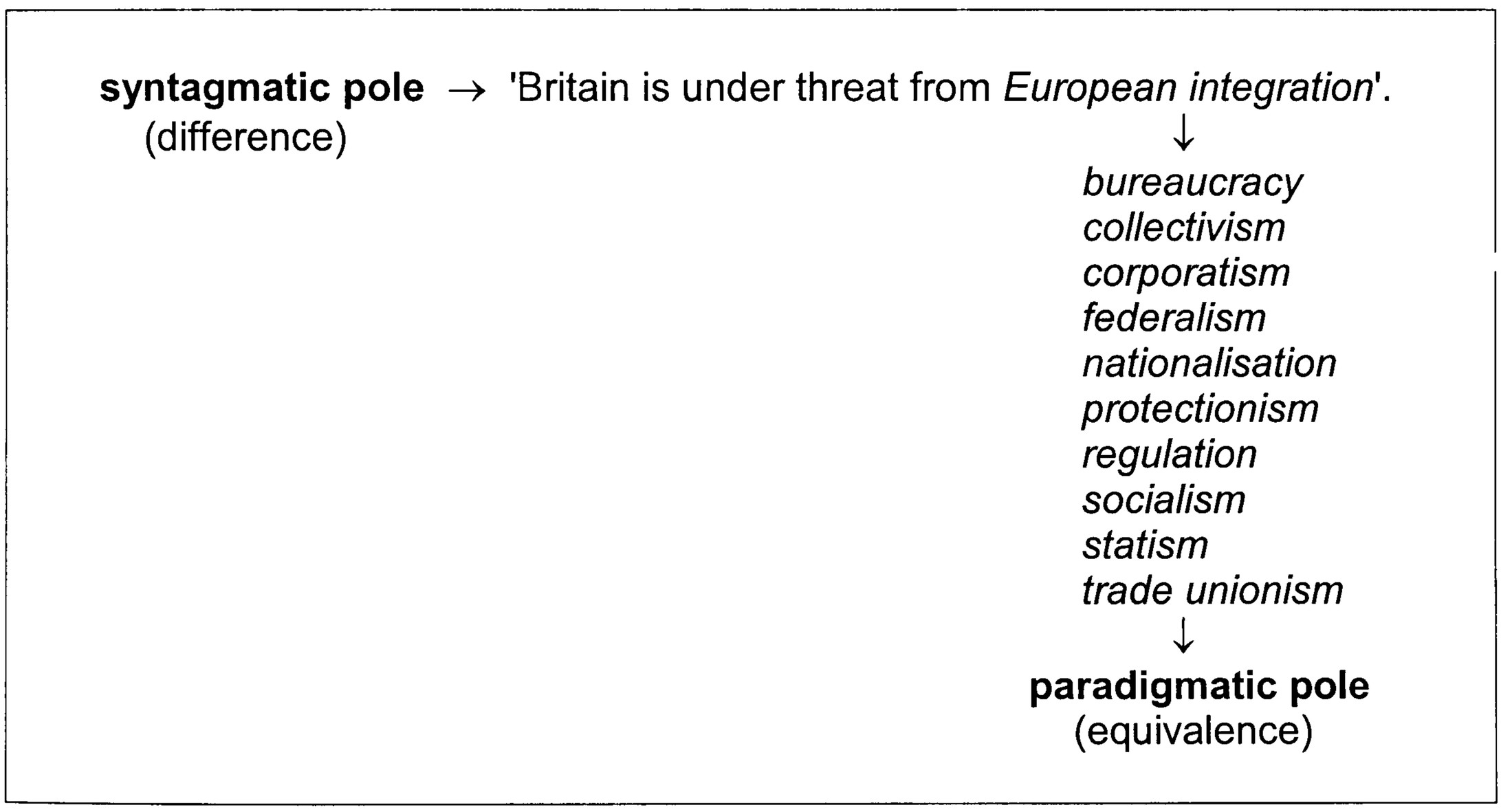

Figure 1: The syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations of words

Here, there is no simple identity between the equivalential identities because they are only the same in one respect while being different in others.[42] Hence, the relation between equivalence and difference is 'undecidable'.[43] The discursive

---

[40] See: Ibid. pp. 112-3.
[41] Laclau, E. (1988) Op. Cit. p. 256.
[42] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 128.
[43] In accordance with the Derridean notion of deconstruction, Laclau and Mouffe expose the 'undecidable' terrain of non-totalization that the decidable inscription of discursive forms must

identities are inscribed both in signifying chains that emphasize their differential value, and in signifying chains that emphasize their equivalence.[44] There exists an unresolvable tension between the differential and equivalential aspects of discursive identities, although political struggles can succeed in emphasizing one of the two aspects. Here, emphasis upon the equivalential aspect simplifies the social and political space by delimiting the play of difference. The collapse of difference into equivalence will produce a loss of meaning because meaning is intrinsically linked to the differential character of identity. As demonstrated below with regard to social antagonism, and *Chapter 5* upon 'Europe, the Other', the result is that the expansion of chains of equivalence is always related to the construction of a 'constitutive outside'.

2.2.2. The workings of different kinds of overdetermination

The workings of different kinds of 'overdetermination' are related to the distinction between relations of difference and equivalence. The concept of overdetermination originates from psychoanalysis and *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Sigmund Freud.[45] In political situations, identity is always

---

presuppose. 'Undecidability' is the name for the unresolvable dilemmas that occur under determinate circumstances. However, it refers not only to the fundamental aporias within discourse, but also to the call for a constitutive decision that articulates social meaning in one way rather than another. (Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 307.) Laclau and Mouffe's reading of Derrida and the postmodern condition also leads them to insist upon the 'the structural undecidability of the social'. That is, the ground of social meaning and action is destabilized, divided and disorganized to the extent that it takes the form of 'an abyss of infinite play', which turns all attempts to ground social identity into provisional and precarious ways of trying to 'naturalize' or 'objectivize' politically constructed identities. (Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 62.) See: Derrida, J. (1988) [1977] *Limited Inc.* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press). pp. 21, 116, 141-50, Derrida, J. (1992) 'Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority', in D. Cornell, M. Rosenfeld and D. G. Carlson (eds) *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. (London: Routledge), pp. 3-67; Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 28-30, 171-4, and Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 62-9. The Derridean notion of 'deconstruction' describes the destabilization of essential identities which derives from the premise that the attempt to determine the essence of things always fails because of ambiguities and undecidables that resist ultimate fixation. (Torfing, J. (1999) Ibid. p. 300). See: Derrida, J. (1988) [1977] Op. Cit. p. 21, 116, 141-50, and Derrida, J. (1992) Op. Cit.

[44] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 97.

[45] Freud, S. (1986) [1900] *The Interpretation of Dreams.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin). See also: Laplanche, J. and J. B. Pontalis (1973) *The Language of Psycho-analysis*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.)

overdetermined in the psychological sense. Overdetermination entails not only a plurality, but also a certain degree of 'irreducibility'. For example, a dream is the product of 'condensation' whereby various different unconscious elements are merged to produce a single manifest sequence.

In sum, overdetermination occurs at the symbolic level and takes the form of either 'condensation' or 'displacement'. 'Condensation' involves the fusion of a variety of significations and meanings into the unity. For example, the process of European integration condenses a variety of demands into a single unity, 'the European Union'. 'Displacement' involves the transferral of the signification of meaning of one particular moment to another moment. For example, this thesis argues that the hegemonic project of Thatcherism transferred the signification of social democracy to the project of European integration. That is, this project became a symbol of the threat posed by social democracy to the British national identity.

For Lacanian psychoanalysis, condensation occurs when a particular moment receives and concentrates other meanings, and displacement occurs when a relation of contiguity is constructed.[46] Thus, condensation is equivalent to *metaphor* and displacement is equivalent to *metonymy*. It is here that an important connection can be made to the distinction between difference and equivalence: relations of difference have neither metaphor nor metonymy. However metonymical relations of contiguity are produced by the equivalential disruption of relations of difference, and metaphors are constructed by the full realization of the paradigmatic sameness of contiguous elements.[47]

---

[46] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 98.
[47] Ibid.

2.2.3. The unifying effects of nodal points

Crucial to the theory of discourse, Laclau and Mouffe explain how the identity of a discourse is created and sustained beyond all possible variations of its positive content. They claim that a multitude of 'floating signifiers' is structured into a unified discursive field through the intervention of a certain 'nodal point' which stops their sliding and fixes their meaning.[48] Here, a 'floating signifier' is a signifier that is overdetermined or underdetermined with meaning because it is articulated differently within different discourses.[49] That is, it is a signifier that has an excess or deficiency of signification because it is simultaneously attached to different signifieds. Thus, it is an ambiguous signifier in the sense that this overdetermination or underdetermination of signifieds prevents it from becoming fully fixed.[50]. As *Chapter 4* of this thesis illustrates, 'subsidiarity' and 'federalism' are floating signifiers because they are overflowed with meaning as they are articulated differently within the different discourses of the member states of the EU.

For Laclau and Mouffe, any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre, by expanding signifying chains which partially fix the meaning of the floating signifier. The concept of 'nodal points' here becomes significant. 'Nodal points' are the privileged discursive points that partially fix meaning within signifying chains. Lacan insisted on these partial fixations through his concept of 'points de capiton' (literally: 'quilting points'), that is, of privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a

---

[48] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 112; Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 87.
[49] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 301.
[50] Laclau, E. (1994b) 'Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?', in J. Weeks (ed.) *The Lesser Evil and the Greater Good*. (London: Rivers Oram Press). p. 167.

signifying chain.[51] This limitation of the productivity of the signifying chain establishes the positions that make predication possible.

The nodal point creates and sustains identity of a given discourse by constructing a knot of definite meanings. This does not imply that it is simply the word in which is condensed all the richness of meaning of the field it 'quilts'. Rather, it is the word that, as a word, on the level of the signifier itself, unifies a given field, constitutes its identity.[52] It is an 'empty signifier'[53], a pure signifier without a signified, that can fix the content of a range of floating signifiers by articulating them within a chain of equivalence.[54] As such, nodal points such as 'God' and 'nation' are not characterized by a supreme density of meaning, but by an emptying of their content, which facilitates their structural role of unifying a discursive terrain.

To elucidate, a variety of signifiers may be floating within the field of discursivity (because their traditional meaning has been lost or their signification has not yet been fixed), then a certain 'master-signifier' intervenes as a nodal point and constitutes their identity by fixing them within a paradigmatic chain of equivalence. Hence, this nodal point fixes the meaning of the chain, sews the meaning to the

---

[51] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 112.
[52] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 95.
[53] An *empty* signifier is a signifier emptied of any precise content, that is, it is a signifier without a signified. (Laclau, E. (1994b) Op. Cit. p. 167.) It is not attached to any signified because of the incessant sliding of the signifieds under the signifier. For example, 'democracy' is an empty signifier because it is so over-coded that it means everything and nothing. (Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 301.) As this chapter explains, empty signifiers can be nodal points that fix the content of floating signifiers by articulating them within a chain of equivalence. Hence, relevant to the construction of a European political community, as examined in *Chapter 6-7*, different empty signifiers (such as 'citizenship' 'the common good', 'democracy', 'liberty', 'peace, 'freedom', 'the nation', 'the people', 'revolution', etc) can signify the absence of a community of fully achieved identities. Why one signifier rather than another assumes the function of signifying this absent communitarian fullness is determined in and through political struggles for hegemony. For further explanation of 'empty signifiers', see: Laclau, E. (1994b) Op. Cit. pp. 167-171, Laclau, E. (1993b) 'The Signifiers of Democracy', in J. H. Carens (ed) *Democracy and Possessive Individualism: The Intellectual Legacy of C. B. Macpherson*. (New York: State University of New York Press) pp. 221-33.
[54] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 97.

floating signifiers, halts the sliding of the meaning.[55] For example, when we 'quilt' floating signifiers (such as 'democracy', 'freedom', 'liberty', 'the state', 'justice', 'peace', etc) through the nodal point 'neo-liberal', it determines a neo-liberal chain of meaning.[56] Thus, for example, 'the state' becomes a means by which individual 'liberty' and 'freedom' are curtailed. As this thesis argues, in Britain, such a neo-liberal quilting has produced an articulation of meaning that conflicts with the meaning produced by the nodal point 'liberal democracy' in Continental Europe. As a consequence, Britain is perceived as an awkward partnership by the rest of Europe.

Indeed, as this thesis aims to demonstrate, the discourse-theoretical conception of the nodal point is instructive to our understanding of contemporary British-European relations. For example, in Europe, there exists an ideological struggle over which 'nodal point' will totalize, include in its series of equivalences, the free-floating elements of a new supranational European discourse. For example, there is an ideological battle between British 'liberal-individualism' and Continental European 'liberal democracy' over the meaning of 'freedom'. British liberal-individualism argues that republican and social democracy, believed to be embodied in the political and social initiatives for European integration, necessarily leads to new forms of serfdom, to the dependency of the individual upon a supranational totalitarian 'super-state'. In contrast, proponents of Continental European liberal democracy argue that individual freedom, to have any meaning at all, must be based upon civil rights, democratic social life, economic equal opportunity, and so forth (all requiring a state guarantor).

---

[55] Ibid. pp. 101-2.
[56] Ibid. pp. 87-8, 102.

2.3. Beyond descriptivism and antidescriptivism: the radical contingency of naming

In all, the nodal point is the point through which the Subject is sewn to the signifier. It is the point of subjectivation of the signifying chain.[57] This concept of 'nodal points' is important because it helps us understand how discursively constructed forms relate to the external world of objects. This is a crucial question for this thesis, particularly because post-structuralism has been accused of presupposing the external existence of objects whose meaning is discursively constructed, and thus, of failing to provide an account of the role played by these objects in the process of signification.[58] To answer this question, Žižek looks to the antidescriptivism of Saul Kripke.[59] As Žižek illustrates below, the Kripkean theory of the 'rigid designator' helps explain the Lacanian concept of the point de capiton as a pure signifier that simultaneously designates and constitutes the identity of an object beyond the variable cluster of its descriptive properties. However, his Lacanian psychoanalytical approach takes him beyond both descriptivism and antidescriptivism.[60]

Žižek begins this discussion by suggesting that we can call the basic experience upon which antidescriptivism is founded, 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers', after the science-fiction film in which an invasion of aliens assume human form.[61] The fact that these aliens look like humans, and have all the same properties, makes them all the more strange. Žižek argues that this problem is the same as anti-Semitism: 'the Other' - the Jews - are 'like us'; it is difficult to recognize them, to determine at the level of positive reality, that 'surplus', that evasive feature, which

---

[57] Ibid. p. 101.
[58] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 48.
[59] Kripke, S. (1980) *Naming and Necessity*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
[60] See: Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 87-129.

differentiates them from us. This problem is also the same as British Euroscepticism: 'the Other' - the Europeans - are 'like us'; it is difficult to determine that surplus which differentiates them from us.

There is a crucial theoretical debate between descriptivism[62] and antidescriptivism[63] regarding how names refer to the objects that they denote. For example, why does the word 'table' refer to a table?[64] The descriptivist account of the relation between the object and its discursively constructed form emphasizes the meaning of the words we use to refer to the external world of objects. A word (or signifier) is the bearer of a particular meaning (or signified), which is defined by a cluster of descriptive features ('table' means an object of a certain shape, serving particular purposes). Subsequently, a word refers to an object in reality in so far it possess properties designated by the cluster of descriptions ('table' means a table because a table has properties comprised in the meaning of the signifier, 'table').[65]

In contrast, for antidescriptivism, a word is connected to an object through an act of 'primal baptism' that establishes a connection between an object and its name. This link is maintained even if the descriptive features that initially determined the meaning of the word change.[66]For example, we will continue to call what we identify as gold by that name even if it is discovered that we have been mistaken in our description of gold. Similarly, significant to this thesis, we will continue to call what we identify as democracy by that name even if it is discovered that we have been mistaken in our description of democracy. Indeed, democracy was

---

[61] Ibid. p. 89.
[62] For example, Searle, J. (1984) *Intentionality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
[63] For example: Kripke, S. (1980) Op. Cit.
[64] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. pp. 89.
[65] Ibid. pp. 89-90.
[66] Ibid. p. 90.

initially identified with 'mob rule' and carried a pejorative meaning, but later emerged as a discourse of popular sovereignty, universal suffrage and equality.[67]

Thus, in contrast to descriptivism, antidescriptivism allows for the way that the meaning of a word (or the signified of signifier) can vary with time within a particular discourse. Moreover, it can allow for the way that the meaning of a word can vary *between* particular discourses. For example, what is signified by democracy can vary between discourses. As Žižek asserts:

> ... is there - on the level of positive, descriptive features - really anything in common between the liberal-individualist notion of democracy and the real-socialist theory, according to which the basic feature of 'real democracy' is the leading role of the Party representing the true interests of the people and thus assuring effective rule?[68]

As examined in *Chapter 4,* 'democracy' has a *parliamentary-liberalist* signified in British (hegemonic) discourse, but a *republican democratic* signified in Continental European (hegemonic) discourse. It is also emphasized that such conflicting signifieds of key principles has been a crucial impediment to the process of European political integration.

Returning to the debate between descriptivism and antidesriptivism, the core of the dispute is that the former emphasizes the immanent, internal 'intentional contents' of a word, whilst the latter regards as decisive the external link, the way a word has been transmitted from subject to subject in a chain of tradition.[69] However, Žižek claims that both descriptivism and antidescriptivism miss the same crucial point of the 'radical contingency of naming'.[70] He argues that descriptivism fails to recognize the circularity of the process of signification that follows from the fact that each name refers to a certain object *because this is the*

---

[67] Laclau, E. (1993b) Op.Cit. p. 222.
[68] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 98.
[69] Ibid. p. 90.

name.[71]For Žižek, it is precisely this tautological character of the process of signification that is explained by the Lacanian conception of the point de capiton, the signifier without a signified to which things themselves refer to recognize themselves in their unity.[72]

Žižek also claims that the Lacanian concept of the nodal point provides an answer to the basic problem of antidescriptivism, which is to determine:

> ... what constitutes the identity of the designated object beyond the ever-changing cluster of descriptive features - what makes an object identical to itself even if all its properties have changed. In other words, how to conceive the objective correlative to the 'rigid designator', to the name in so far as it denotes the same object in all possible worlds, in all counterfactual situations.[73]

As a remedy, antidescriptivism constructs a 'myth' of an 'omniscient observer of history'[74] who can reconstruct the causal chain back to the act of primal baptism in order to establish the 'surplus' in the object which remains the same in all counterfactual situations. However, Žižek argues that antidescriptivists search in vain for this objective correlative to the name. There are no permanent, objective features to be named by the name in question because the object only exists as *the retroactive effect of the act of naming itself*.[75] It is the name itself, the signifier, which supports the identity of the object. It is this signifier, which invokes the retroactive constitution of the object to which it refers, that is the Lacanian nodal point.

---

[70] Ibid. p. 92.
[71] Ibid. p. 93.
[72] Ibid. pp. 95-6.
[73] Ibid. p. 94.
[74] See: Donnellan, K. (1974) 'Speaking of Nothing', *The Philosophical Review*, Volume 83, pp. 3-32. Reprinted in: S. P. Schwartz (ed.) (1977) *Naming, Necessity and Natural Kinds*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press). See also: Searle, J. R. (1984) Op. Cit. p. 234-242, 252-3, and Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 92, 94.
[75] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 95.

Indeed, for Žižek, the main achievement of antidescriptivism - albeit unknowingly- is that its concept of the 'rigid designator' helps us understand Lacan's conception of the nodal point. More precisely, in contrast to descriptivism, antidescriptivism enables us to conceive 'objet petit a'[76] as the real-impossible correlative of the rigid designator, that is, of the nodal point as 'pure' signifier.[77] As Žižek explains, the surplus in the object that stays the same in all possible worlds is 'something in it more than itself', the Lacanian 'objet petit a':

> ... we search in vain for it in positive reality because it has no positive consistency - because it is just an objectification of a void, of a discontinuity opened up in reality by the emergence of the signifier.[78]

It is the same for gold and, as Marx illustrated, it is the same for commodity: we search in vain among its positive properties for the feature that constitutes its value (and not only its use-value). Thus:

> What is missed by the antidescriptivist idea of an external chain of communication through which reference is transmitted is therefore the radical contingency of naming, the fact that naming itself retroactively constitutes its reference. Naming is necessary but it is, so to speak, necessary afterwards, retroactively, once we are already 'in it'.[79]

Hence, Žižek claims that the nodal point quilts the signifying chain in a *retroactive* direction: the effect of meaning is always produced backwards. To elucidate, when a master-signifier intervenes within a field of discursivity, it *retroactively* constitutes the identity of floating signifiers by fixing them within a paradigmatic chain of equivalence. That is, this nodal point fixes *retroactively* the meaning of

---

[76] On the concept of the 'objet petit a', see: Lacan, J. (1979) [1977] *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. *Chapters 6-9*, pp. 67-119, 263-282. (Harmondsworth: Penguin). See also: Fink, B. (1995) *The Lacanian Subject*: *Between Language and Jouissance*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press); Kay, S. (2003) Op. Cit. pp. 158-172; Stavrakakis, Y. (1999) *Lacan and the Political*. (London: Routledge), and Wright, E. and E. Wright (eds) (1999) Op. Cit.

[77] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 95.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

the chain.[80]Thus, when we 'quilt' floating signifiers through the nodal point 'neo-liberalism', it *retroactively* determines a neo-liberal chain of meaning.[81]

Here, it is important to acknowledge that the retroactive constitution of meaning is not an effect of the nodal point giving the floating signifiers their meaning. Rather, the signification of the floating elements within a paradigmatic chain of equivalence is a consequence of their reference to a certain symbolic code (for example, the code that regulates the discourse of British liberal-individualism or the social democratic discourses of Continental Europe).[82] The significance of the nodal point is that it retroactively submits these floating elements to this code. As such, the conception of nodal points reveals the secret of metaphors: their capacity to unify a certain discourse by partially fixing the identity of its moments.[83]

With regard to the retroactive constitution of meaning, it is also important to observe the 'logic of transference', the basic mechanism that produces the illusion proper to the phenomena of 'transference':

> ... transference is the obverse of the staying behind of the signified with respect to the stream of the signifiers; it consists of the illusion that the meaning of a certain element (which was retroactively fixed by the intervention of the master-signifier) was present in it from the very beginning as its immanent essence.[84]

Hence, for example, the British are in transference when it appears to them that 'real' freedom is 'in its very nature' opposed to social democracy and the political integration of Europe, that the state is 'in its very nature' totalitarian, and so forth. The paradox lies in the fact that this transferential illusion is necessary - it is the

---

[80] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 99; Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. pp. 101-2.
[81] See: Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. pp. 87-8, 102.
[82] Ibid. p. 103.
[83] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 99.
[84] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 102.

very measure of success of the operation of ideological 'quilting': the 'capitonnage' is successful only in so far as it effaces its own traces.[85]

In sum, Žižek argues that both descriptivism and antidescriptivism fail to observe that a rigid designator aims at an impossible kernel, at what is in an object more than the object, at the surplus produced by the signifying operation. Here, the crucial point is the connection between the radical contingency of naming and the logic of emergence of the rigid designator through which a given object achieves it identity. The radical contingency of naming implies an irreducible gap between 'the Real'[86] and modes of symbolization: a certain constellation can be symbolized in different ways, but the Real itself contains no necessary mode of symbolization.[87]

This premise is significant to this thesis with regard to the development of a common European identity, as obstructed by the British national identity. It is because the Real itself offers no support for its direct symbolization - because every symbolization is in the last resort contingent - that the only way that Europe can achieve its unity is through the agency of a signifier, through reference to a nodal point as a 'pure' signifier. As Žižek explains, it is not the real object that guarantees, as the point of reference, the unity and identity of a certain ideological experience. On the contrary, it is the reference to a 'pure' signifier that gives unity and identity to our experience of reality itself. It is a common phenomenological assumption that 'reality' is always symbolized, and that the way it is experienced is always mediated through different modes of symbolization. However, what Lacan contributes to our understanding of phenomenology is that the unity of a given

---

[85] Ibid.
[86] See: Lacan, J. [1977] (1979) Op. Cit. (especially pp. 42-64); Fink, B. (1995). Op. Cit; Kay, S. (2003) Op. Cit. (particularly pp. 1-16, 168); Stavrakakis, Y. (1999) Op. Cit; Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit.

'experience of meaning', itself the horizon of an ideological field of meaning, is supported by a 'pure', meaningless and empty signifier, a 'signifier without a signified'.[88]That is, a nodal point.

The emphasis upon the radical contingency of naming is important to political science and to the aims of this thesis. For example, as indicated above, it is apparent that the signifier 'democracy' has many different meanings and is used as a name for many different and even opposing political-institutional arrangements. As identified in *Chapter 4*, this generates the need to find a minimal definition of democracy that captures the essential features of the object so that we all know precisely what we are talking about. Similarly, as evident within the process of European integration, signifiers such as 'subsidiarity', 'federalism', and 'European Union' have different and opposing meanings in different national discourses, and thus, there is a strong need to find a minimal and universal definition of such terms so that it is possible to know precisely what is being negotiated. However, according to the radical contingency of naming, we search in vain to determine the positive features of such objects against which we can assess the various candidates for a minimal definition. As Žižek implies, this is because such objects only exist as an objectified void created and maintained by the name that names them. For example, this is reflected in the general feeling that we all know what democracy is, but that it just keeps escaping attempts to rigorously define it. This feeling suggests that the object of democracy is nothing but 'the unrepresentable kernel of the Lacanian Real'.[89] As such, the object is what cannot be fully conceptualized, and all definitions will appear, in the absence

---

(particularly *Chapter 5* and especially pp. 161-73), Žižek, S. (2001) *On Belief.* (London, New York: Routledge). pp. 100-4), and Wright, E. and E. Wright (eds) (1999) Op. Cit. (especially: pp. 11-36).
[87] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 97.
[88] Ibid. p. 98.
[89] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 50.

of a pre-established object, as political constructions than can change with time within discourse, and can differ between discourses.

2.4. Towards an anti-essentialist concept of discourse and hegemonic struggle

As Laclau and Mouffe explain, the nodal point in a given formation increasingly acts as one of several discursive centres.[90] As described in *Section 2.2.3.* above, it exercises a totalizing effect on contiguous positions such that they partially lose their floating character and become parts of the structured network of meaning.[91] In essentialist theory, an 'essence' plays this totalizing role.[92] For example, essentialist Marxist class theory defines all struggles in terms of their structural class position. In contrast, for Laclau and Mouffe's delineated project of radical democracy, as advocated by this thesis (see *Chapter 7*), there exists an articulation of particular struggles, none of which claims to be 'the Truth', the last signifier, *the* 'true meaning' of all struggles.

Nevertheless, the title 'radical democracy' itself indicates how the very possibility of their articulation implies the 'nodal', determining role of a certain struggle which, precisely as a particular struggle, outlines the horizon of all the other struggles. For the project of radical democracy, this determining role belongs to democracy: all other struggles could be conceived as the gradual radicalization and extension of the democratic project to new domains.[93] Here, there exists a 'dialectic paradox' because the particular struggle that plays a hegemonic role, far from enforcing a violent suppression of the differences, opens the very space for the relative

---

[90] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 112.
[91] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 87.
[92] Smith, A. M. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 98.
[93] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 88.

autonomy of the particular struggles. Hence, all struggles are made possible only through reference to democratic-egalitarian discourse.[94]

Therefore, for a given discursive field, it is important to isolate the particular struggle that at the same time determines the horizon of its totality. However, this is held by Žižek to be the crucial theoretical problem: how does this determining, totalizing role of a particular struggle differ from the traditionally conceived 'hegemony' by which a certain struggle appears as the Truth of all others, so that all other struggles are in the last resort are only forms of its expression, and victory in this struggle offers us the key to victory in all other domains? That is, how do we formulate the determining role of a particular domain without falling into a trap of essentialism?[95] Indeed, as described in *Chapter 2*, Marxist approaches to British-European integration have fallen into this trap by suggesting that the Continental European project of European integration represents the possibility of *true* economic and democratic development. These accounts also suggest that such development has been obstructed in Britain because of the success of an ideology that represents a *false* consciousness that serves the opposing interests of its ruling class. However, as will now be examined, the critical philosophy of Kripke[96] provides the conceptual tools that make it possible to avoid this problem of essentialism.

2.4.1. Kripkean theory and anti-essentialism

Žižek argues that the Kripkean concept of the 'rigid designator' offers a conceptual apparatus enabling us to conceive the status of the anti-essentialism of Laclau and Mouffe. The traditional essentialist illusion consists in the belief that it is

---

[94] Ibid. pp. 88-9.
[95] Ibid. pp. 89.

possible to determine a definite cluster of features, of positive properties, which defines the permanent essence of a notion such as 'democracy'. Every phenomenon that pretends to be classified as 'democratic' should fulfil the condition of possessing this cluster of features.[97] Such is exemplified by the Marxist accounts of British-European integration in *Chapter 2*, which uphold an essentialist and ethnocentric conception of Continental European democratic development. In contrast, the anti-essentialism of Laclau and Mouffe, applied by this thesis, asserts that it is impossible to define any such essence, any cluster of positive properties which would remain the same in 'all possible worlds', in all counterfactual situations. Thus, as Žižek explains:

> In the last resort, the only way to define 'democracy' is to say that it contains all political movements and organizations which legitimize, designate themselves as 'democratic'; the only way to define 'Marxism' is to say that this term designates all movements and theories which legitimize themselves through Marx, and so on. In other words, the only possible definition of an object in its identity is that this is the object which is always designated by the same signifier - tied to the same signifier. It is the signifier which constitutes the kernel of the object's 'identity'.[98]

Relevant to this thesis, the traditional essentialist illusion is evident within both the political debate as well as orthodox academic analyses of the process of European integration. Both have ignored that a definite cluster of features cannot be determined which defines the permanent essence of such notions as 'democracy', 'European union', 'subsidiarity', 'federalism', and so forth. However, in accordance with the anti-essentialism of Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek, this thesis argues that - on the level of positive, descriptive features - such notions contain a different and even opposing cluster of features within the different discourses of Britain and Continent Europe.

---

[96] Kripke, S. (1980) Op. Cit.
[97] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p.98.
[98] Ibid.

Moreover, as illustrated in *Chapter 2*, orthodox approaches to British-European integration have tended to describe the British conception of democracy and other terms as flawed and underdeveloped in relation to those upheld in Continental Europe which are conceived in essentialist terms as the *true* conceptions. Conversely, British Eurosceptics have upheld British conceptions as superior and as the Truth. However, in contrast, and following Žižek, this thesis argues that it is unproductive to uphold either British or Continental European conceptions as true or false, particularly if the process of European integration is to be successful. Indeed, by advancing either as the Truth, politicians and theorists alike can only serve to reaffirm the antagonism between Britain and Continental Europe that has obstructed this process so far. Rather, such terms should not be defined by their positive content, but only by their 'positional-relational identity'. For example, 'democracy' should not be defined by the positive content of any conception (its signified), but only by its positional-relational identity - by its opposition, its differential relation to 'non-democratic' - whereas the concrete content can vary significantly: to mutual exclusion (for Continental European social democracy, the term 'democratic' signifies the very phenomena that represent 'anti-democratic totalitarianism' for British liberalism).

Thus, we arrive at the fundamental paradox of the nodal point:

> ... the rigid designator, which totalizes an ideology by halting the metonymic sliding of its signified, is not a point of supreme density of Meaning, a kind of Guarantee which, by being itself excepted from the differential interplay of elements, would serve as a stable and fixed point of reference. On the contrary, it is the element which represents the agency of the signifier within the field of the signified. In itself it is nothing but a 'pure difference': its role is purely structural, its nature is purely performative - its signification coincides with its own act of enunciation; in short, it is a 'signifier without the signified'.[99]

[99] Ibid. p.99.

Hence, in the analysis of a given discourse it is important to detect, behind the element that holds it together (for example, 'the nation'), this self-referential, tautological, performative operation.

Therefore, the discursive dimension is the effect of a certain 'error of perspective': within the field of meaning, the element which represents the agency of pure signifier, is perceived as the point which 'gives meaning' to all others and thus, totalizes the field of meaning. Here, the element that represents the immanence of its own process of enunciation is experienced as a type of 'transcendent guarantee'; the element that only holds the place of a certain lack is perceived as a point of supreme plenitude. That is, pure difference is perceived as identity exempted from the relational-differential interplay and guaranteeing its homogeneity.[100]

In all, the Kripkean concept of the 'rigid designator' is significant because it makes it possible to avoid essential meanings. In addition, Žižek argues that the meaning of words is regulated by the symbolic code of a given discourse, and thus, meanings can vary between different discourses. Here, the psychoanalytical insights of Žižek are significant because this thesis aims to show that the discourses of Britain and Continental Europe uphold different meanings of words, and that this divergence in meaning has obstructed the process of European integration. Moreover, overcoming these divergences becomes difficult if we accept the anti-essentialist position that we cannot advance particular meanings as the Truth. That is, how can we agree upon the meaning of words if there is no higher ground of truth from which to advance them?

---

[100] Ibid.

This exposes a problem for Laclau and Mouffe's delineated project of radical democracy: struggles outside the democratic-egalitarian discourse will not pursue the same democratic-egalitarian horizon. Thus, without falling into the essentialist trap, how can struggles outside the democratic-egalitarian discourse be persuaded to join in the fight for these democratic and egalitarian ideals? This problem is significant to this thesis because Britain is outside the democratic-egalitarian discourse that has developed in Continental Europe since the Democratic Revolution.[101] Hence, Britain does not pursue the same democratic-egalitarian horizon as Continental Europe. Moreover, this divergence in discourse is reflected in the British awkward relationship with Europe: as Britain is outside this Continental European democratic-egalitarian discourse, it has diverging ideas, meanings and interests. Thus, how can we establish the same horizon in Britain? How can Britain be persuaded to accept democratic egalitarian initiatives if there is no way of demonstrating the truth or superiority of these ideas? Without any claim to truth, on what grounds can we even argue that Britain should be persuaded to? In sum, how is it decided which meanings, ideas and interests we should follow in pursuit of a unified and democratic Europe? Such questions will be addressed in *Part III*, and they relate to the concept of 'hegemony' examined below.

2.5. The unity and limits of discourse

Finally, it is important to consider how a discourse is unified and how its limits are established. With regard to the *unity* of discourse, Michel Foucault proposed that a discourse cannot find any principle of unity in reference to the same object, in a common style in the production of meaning; in the constancy of its concepts, or in

---

[101] On the 'Democratic Revolution', see *Chapter 5 and Chapter 7.*

reference to a common theme.[102] The coherence of a discourse is given only in the shape of a 'regularity in dispersion'.[103] Following Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe argue that there is no essential principle of coherence and that discourses are to be conceived as regulated systems of dispersion.[104] As they explain, although the discursive moments are dispersed, the ordering effects of the relations of difference and equivalence, the workings of different kinds of overdetermination, and the unifying effects of nodal points, all create a certain regularity which can be signified as a 'totality'.[105]

Thus, the unity of discourse is provided in terms of a 'regularity in dispersion'. Laclau and Mouffe account for the construction of the regularity in dispersion of discourses by developing a theory of 'hegemony'.

3.0. The concept of hegemony

In discourse theory, hegemony tends to substitute for the more traditional concept of 'politics'. As Torfing asserts, similar to hegemony, politics is often conceived in terms of the pursuit of individual or collective interests and as a matter of choosing a policy option that maximizes or satisfies a pregiven hierarchy of preferences.[106] However, hegemony emphasizes the construction of identity, for which values and beliefs are an integral part. Identity is not the starting point of politics, but something that is constructed, maintained and transformed in and through political struggles.

---

[102] Foucault, M. (1985) [1969] *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. (London: Tavistock). pp. 21-39.
[103] See: Laclau , E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 105-6.
[104] Ibid. p. 106.
[105] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 99.
[106] Ibid. p. 82.

Struggles for hegemony and its establishment by political projects are important to discourse theory because hegemonic practices are crucial to political processes, and because political processes are vital for the formation, functioning and dissolution of discourses. That is, hegemony is achieved if and when a political project or force determines the rules and meanings in a particular social formation. Thus, the concept of hegemony concerns who is going to be 'master': which political force will decide the dominant forms of conduct and meaning in a given social context.[107]

For Laclau and Mouffe, hegemonic operations are a special type of articulatory practice as they determine the dominant rules that structure the identities of discourses and social formations. This exemplary type of political practice presupposes two further conditions. First, hegemonic practices require the drawing of political frontiers - the struggle between opposing forces and the exclusion of certain possibilities in the establishment of hegemony. Thus, hegemonic practices always involve the exercise of power as one political project attempts to impose its will on another. Second, this practice requires the availability of floating signifiers not fixed by existing discourses. Due to the availability of contingent elements, hegemonic practices then aim to *articulate* those elements into an expanding political project, thereby conferring a partial meaning upon them.[108]

Hegemony concerns political and moral-intellectual leadership[109], but discourse theory emphasizes that it also has an important constructivist aspect. The political and moral-intellectual leadership of a hegemonic force hinges upon the construction of a discursive formation that provides a surface of inscription for a

---

[107] Howarth, D. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 124.
[108] Ibid.

wide range of demands, views and attitudes.[110] This constructivist aspect introduces the concept of 'articulation'.

3.1. Hegemony and articulation

The construction of hegemonic discourse is the result of articulation. In relation to this concept, Laclau and Mouffe advance the following definitional propositions:

> .... we will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structural totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we call *discourse*. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call *moments*. By contrast, we will call *element* any difference that is not discursively articulated.[111]

The articulation of discursive elements into contingent moments within a hegemonic discourse occurs in a conflictual terrain of power and resistance and thus, always includes an element of force or repression. Hence, hegemony is defined as the expansion of a discourse (or set of discourses) into a dominant horizon of social orientation and action by means of articulating unfixed elements into partially fixed moments in a context criss-crossed by antagonistic forces.[112]

This definition of hegemony is valid for the analysis of processes of disarticulation and rearticulation that establish and maintain political as well as moral-intellectual leadership. Hence, hegemony refers not only to the privileged position of a nation-state in a group of nation-states, but more generally to the construction of a predominant discursive formation. For example, as examined in *Chapter 5*, neo-liberalism became a hegemonic discourse in Britain to the extent that it has

---

[109] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 66-7.
[110] See: Torfing, J (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 101.
[111] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 105.
[112] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 101.

redefined the terms of political debate and restored the traditional British liberal-individualist agenda.

Moreover, the discourse-theoretical concept of hegemony is instructive for the analysis of the processes of disarticulation and rearticulation that may redefine the political debate and agenda of Europe as a result of a supranational process of European integration. That is, it makes it possible to examine the construction and form of the new hegemonic supranational discursive formation that would result from this process. For example, would supranational European integration lead to the articulation of the different discursive formations of Britain and Continental Europe, or would one existing discursive formation predominate and define the terms of the political debate and agenda of the EU? Would either existing discursive formation be disarticulated and rearticulated with the other? Could a different and more progressive discursive formation be established?

3.2. The genealogy of the concept of hegemony

Laclau and Mouffe demonstrate how the concept of hegemony was introduced into Marxist discourse to supplement 'the economistic logic of necessity' with a 'political logic of contingency'.[113] From its first appearance in the writings of Pavel Axelrod[114] and Giorgi Plekhanov[115], through to Lenin[116] and Trotsky[117], the initial

---

[113] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 7-92.

[114] See: Ascher, A. [alias Pavel Axelrod] (1972) *Pavel Axelrod and the Development of Menshevism.* Russian Research Center Studies. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press). For other published and unpublished work by Pavel Axelrod, see: Sterling Memorial Library, *Leaders of the Russian Revolution*. Microtext Reading Room, fiche call number: Fiche B2506: 4. With Giorgio Plekhanov, Vera Zasulich, Lenin, Trotsky and Julius Martov, Pavel Axelrod was an important Menshevik and he was an original editor of 'Iskra' (Spark), a paper first published by the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) in December, 1900. See: Lynch, M. (2000) *Reaction and Revolutions: Russia 1881-1924.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Educational).

[115] See: Plekhanov, G. V. (1969) [1947] *Fundamental Problems of Marxism.* Translated into English by Julius Katzer. (London: Lawrence & Wishart). p. 23. Originally published in 1947 as 'Le Question Fondamentali del Marxismo', Milan.

[116] See, for example: Lenin, V. I. (1964) [1917] *Letters from Afar.* First Letter: 'The First Stage of the First Revolution', *Collected Works*, Volume 23, August 1916-March 1917. pp. 297, 302. (pp. 297-

and rather authoritarian notion of hegemony was conceived as an alliance of separate identities held together by the tactical manipulations of leadership within the communist vanguard party.[118] However, Gramsci developed a more democratic concept that embraced both political and moral-intellectual leadership and aimed to articulate a collective will with a more national-popular character.[119]It is at this point that hegemony becomes no longer defined as an alliance of preconstituted identities, but as a process of production of a new collective identity. As for Georges Sorel[120], the contingent articulation of social forces and political tasks is emphasized.

Gramsci also acknowledges the significance of ideology, symbols and myths. However, in direct contrast to Sorel, Gramsci contends that the articulation of collective wills occurs at the level of democratic politics. It is the political struggles within state, economy and civil society that determine the fate of competing

---

308) Translated from Russian by M. S. Levin, J. Fineberg and others, and edited by M. S. Levin. (London: Lawrence & Wishart). pp. 297, 302. First published in *Pravda*, Nos 14-15, March 21-22, 1917; Lenin, V. I. (1964) [1916] 'Imperialism and the Split of Socialism', *Collected Works*, Volume 23, Ibid. pp. 117-8. (pp. 105-120) First published in *Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata*, No. 2, December, 1916.

[117] See, for example: Trotsky, L. (1971) [1922] *1905*: *The First Russian Revolution*. Translated from Russian by Tysiacha Deviatot Piatyi. (New York: Random House). pp. 333, 339.

[118] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 49-65.

[119] See: Gramsci, A. (1971) [1948-51] *Quaderni del Carcere* (Prison Notebooks). (Turin: Editori Riuniti). Volumes 2-3. p. 349, 1058, 1875. This first definitive Italian Variorum version was edited by Valentino Gerratana. The English translation, entitled 'Selections from the Prison Notebooks', was first published in 1971 and was edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart). However, Gramsci first employed the concept of hegemony in a Leninist sense in: Gramsci, A. (1926) [1874*) Quelques Thèmes sur la Question Meridionale* ('Some Aspects of the Southern Question'). First published in appendix of: M. A. Macciochi (1874) *Pour Gramsci.* (Paris: Seuil). p. 316. Edited and translated into English by Q. Hoare in: Gramsci, A. (1978) *Selections from Political Writings (1921-26)*. (London: Lawrence & Wishart). p. 443. (pp. 441-462). It is only later in *Prison Notebooks* that it becomes the indissoluble union of political, intellectual, and moral leadership, which goes beyond the Leninist idea of a simple class alliance. (Mouffe, C. (1979) 'Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Gramsci and Marxist Theory.* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul). pp. 178-179). On Gramsci's concept of hegemony, see: Mouffe, C. (1979) Ibid. pp. 168-204, Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Ibid. pp. 65-7, and Simon, R. (1982) *Gramsci's Political Thought*: *An Introduction.* (London: Lawrence & Wishart). pp. 21-28.

[120] Sorel, G. (1976) [1902] *Critical Essays on Marxism*. Translated by J. Stanley and C. Stanley. Originally published in 1902 as 'Saggi di Critica del Maxismo'. (Palermo, Sandron), and Sorel, G. [1908] (1950) *Reflections on Violence*. (London, New York: Macmillan). Translated by T. E. Hume. Originally published in 1950 as 'Réflections sur la Violence'. (Rivière). See also: Stanley, J. L. (ed.) (1976) *From Georges Sorel: Essays in Socialism and Philosophy*. (New York: Oxford University Press). On significance of Sorel to the development of the concept of hegemony, see: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 37-42, 44-5.

hegemonic projects. For Laclau and Mouffe, the problem of the Gramscian conception is that it still maintains that the social classes have an ontologically privileged role in the struggle for hegemony (because of their structural position at the level of the relations of production).[121] By removing this last economistic residue, Laclau and Mouffe expose how the contingent logic of hegemonic articulation can develop its theoretical and political potentialities.[122] Hence, hegemony becomes defined as an articulatory practice instituting nodal points that partially fix the meaning of the social in an organized system of differences.[123] The discursive system articulated by a hegemonic project is delimited by specific political frontiers resulting from the expansion of chains of equivalence.

3.3. Hegemony, the Subject and identification

The impossibility of the objectivity and determining capacity of the (discursive) structure, as explained in *Section 2.1*, is reflected in the impossibility of the objectivity and determining capacity of social agency. As Laclau explains, social agency cannot be conceived as a structurally determined subject position that is inscribed upon the Subject through the process of social determination and ideological interpellation because the incompleteness of the structure prevents structural determination of objective positions within the structure.[124] Nor can social agency be conceived as an objective essence that is liberated by the dislocation of the structure.[125]

---

[121] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 69-71.
[122] Ibid. p. 69.
[123] See: Ibid. pp. 134-7.
[124] Laclau, E. (1990a) Op. Cit. pp. 43-4.
[125] Ibid. p. 44.

To elucidate, the dislocation of the structure prevents the Subject from being determined by the structure. Thus, the Subject has a *failed* structural identity.[126] The incompleteness of the structural identity constitutes the Subject as the locus of a decision about how to establish itself as a concrete subjectivity with a fully fledged identity. Hence, the Subject is partially self-determined in that it constitutes the locus of a decision that is not determined by the structure, which is already dislocated.[127]

Following Žižek, it is at this point in the analysis that it is instructive to examine the Subject *before* its subjectivation, which is penetrated by a constitutive lack.[128] This lack is *constitutive* precisely because the Subject *is* this lack in the sense that it only exists in the attempt to overcome it.[129] The lack itself provides an anti-essentialist conception of the Subject because nothing determinate can follow from a lack, which is defined by the very absence of a positive essence.

The process of subjectivation takes the form of an attempt to fill the empty space of this lack through identification. The split and divided subject seeks a fully achieved identity through acts of identification.[130] However, these acts take place within an *undecidable* terrain exposed by the dislocation in the structure. Consequently, the Subject seeks to identify with a hegemonic project that can offer a credible solution to the crisis or disorder of the dislocated structure.[131] Thus, the Subject is nothing but the gap between the undecidable structure and the decision of how to resolve the rift in the social, which has been caused by

---

[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid. p. 30.
[128] See: Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. 169-82.
[129] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 295.
[130] Laclau, E. (1990a) Op. Cit. p. 60; Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 181.
[131] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 151-4.

dislocation. As *Chapter 6* illustrates, this proposition is particularly significant to our understanding of the role of hegemony and representation in the EU.[132]

In contrast to essentialist conceptions, the absence of a single and privileged foundation means that there are many possible points of identification for the split and divided Subject. Indeed, as argued in *Part III* of this thesis, there exists a plurality of identifications and subject positions in contemporary Europe. The Subject may identify with many different things, and thus, may have many different 'subject positions'. Hence, a *subjectivated individual* is a masquerading void.[133] There might be many inconsistencies between the different identifications of the Subject, but a 'minimal consistency'[134] between subject positions is produced by hegemonic strategies (or myths) that aim to articulate different struggles and identities around a nodal point. As demonstrated in *Chapter 5,* such hegemonic strategies tend to produce social antagonisms, as evidenced by the British antagonism with Continental Europe.

The acceptance of this Lacanian conception of the Subject before it subjectivation represents a significant break from the orthodox Marxist tradition. In their earlier work, Laclau and Mouffe had applied the Althusserian theory of subject positions rather than developing such a theory of the Subject.[135] Here, subject positions were articulated into relatively unified ensembles through hegemonic struggles, and the limits of their different hegemonic projects were established by social antagonism. In addition, social antagonism also negated the identities of the articulated subjectivities by confronting them with an enemy force. However, as explained further in *Section 4.4.*, Laclau and Mouffe came to accept Žižek's

---

[132] See also: Laclau, E. (1995) 'Subject of Politics, Politics of the Subject', *Differences*, Volume 7, No. 1. p. 155-6; Žižek, S. (1991) *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor.* (Verso: London). pp. 42-6, 121-2.
[133] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 150.

argument that this Althusserian approach failed to acknowledge that what is negated in social antagonism is always-already negated. That is, they had not theorized the constitutive lack of the Subject before its subjectivation at the level of subject positions.[136]

The analysis will now turn to the concept of social antagonism, which is developed by Laclau and Mouffe to explain how the limits of discourse are constructed.

4.0. Social antagonism

'Social antagonism' tends to substitute for the more traditional concept of 'conflict'. The fundamental state of society is often conceived to be characterized by conflict because of the absence of a substantive common good and the failure of the mechanisms of normative integration within social systems. However, conflict is often conceived merely in terms of an episodic rivalry that ignores its role in constructing the identity of hegemonic discourses. Such is explained by the concept of social antagonism that examines the constitutive role of 'friend-enemy' divisions.[137]

Laclau and Mouffe claim that discourses are historically contingent and politically constructed. Here, it is instructive to observe how Derrida[138] and Richard Rorty[139] elucidate the historicity and contingency of identities. For Derrida, identities are never fully constituted because their existence depends upon something external

---

[134] See: Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 75.
[135] For example, see: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 115.
[136] See also: Laclau, E. (1990a) Op. Cit. pp. 5-41; Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 52-3, 128-31; and Žižek, S. (1990a) Op Cit. pp. 249-54.
[137] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 82.
[138] See, for example: Derrida J. (1981) [1972] *Positions.* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).
[139] See, for example: Rorty, R. (1980) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), Rorty, R. (1989) *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

to, or different from, identity. For Rorty, social agents, communities and languages are all historical products vulnerable to change and transformation. However, these two perspectives pose a problem for political research: if identities are never ultimately fixed, how is an identity possible? Are we condemned to live in a world full of meaninglessness and chaos? That is, if we inhabit a world without any closure, is there no possibility of fixing the identity of discourses at all?[140]

Laclau and Mouffe resolve this problem with the affirmation of the primacy of political practices in constructing identities - it is through the drawing of political frontiers and constructing antagonisms between 'friends' and 'enemies' that discourses acquire their identity. Indeed, the construction and experience of social antagonisms is important to discourse theory in three respects. First, the creation of an antagonistic relationship - which always creates an 'enemy' or 'other' - is crucial to the production of political frontiers. It is by contrast to the (deviant/alien/abnormal) 'Other' that we are reassured of our superiority and 'rightness', and that such 'orthodox' attitudes are reproduced and reinforced. Hence, secondly, the establishment of antagonistic relationships and the stabilisation of political frontiers are crucial for the partial fixing of the identity of discursive formations and social agents. Finally, the experience of antagonisms is exemplary in exposing the contingency of identity.[141]

Discourse theory holds that such antagonisms exist because it is impossible for agents and groups to find full and positive identities. The presence of the 'enemy' in an antagonistic relationship prevents the attainment of the identity as 'friend' by the Other. For example, as the process of European integration directly prevents the identity of Britain as an independent sovereign, nation state, so for the rest of

---

[140] Howarth, D. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 119.
[141] Ibid. pp. 121-122.

Europe, Britain is preventing or undermining the completion of the EU. Thus, the experience of antagonism - the conflict between Britain and the EU - demonstrates the mutual failure of identity for both; as each struggles to maintain its identity and will in the face of the negating Other.

Antagonisms are also subject to a process of construction and deconstruction. For example, during the integration process, the EU has attempted to accommodate individual member states in a system of non-antagonistic relationships. This is what Laclau and Mouffe have called 'the logic of difference' above.[142] They argue that this logic may take place either through a partial process of assimilation, or through a policy of 'divide and rule', each being underpinned by the exclusion of those forces resistant to incorporation. As is often the case, resistance to these forces - here, to the pressures of European integration - results in an attempt to interrupt and challenge these 'divisionary' logics. The manner in which this antagonism is organised generally involves the development of a frontier against the Other. In doing so, the various manifestations of the Other - languages, traditions, institutions, cultures, and so forth - become equivalent as they are discursively constructed as the 'enemy'; symbolising anti-'us'. Hence, symbolising 'anti-Britain', the EU becomes the enemy of the British nation. Simultaneously, the different identities of those *against* the Other are condensed into, for this example, notions such as 'the British nation', prevented by the Other from realising 'freedom', its 'traditional way of life', and so forth. Thus, the EU as the Other is presented as blocking the British identity.

As Howarth explains, the floating signifiers symbolising an antagonistic relationship are crucial to the analysis of the hegemonic practices at play and the

manner by which political subjects are being constituted.[143] Thus, in *Part II*, this thesis will identify the floating signifiers that have symbolized the British antagonistic relationship with the EU. This will improve our understanding of the hegemonic development of the EU and the degree to which this process is reconstituting the political subjects of Britain and Continental Europe.

4.1. Social antagonism and hegemony

Hegemonic articulation involves the negation of identity in two senses: by the negation of alternative ideas, meanings and options, and, of those people identifying with them.[144] For example, *Chapter 5* demonstrates the British hegemonic articulation negating alternative European ideas, meanings and options for European integration as well as those European people and 'Eurocrats' who identify with them. The hegemonic force, which is responsible for the negation of individual or collective identity, constructs the excluded identity as one of a series of threatening obstacles to the full realization of chosen meanings and options. Again, *Chapter 5* illustrates how the British government constructed the European identity as one of a series of threatening obstacles to the full realization of British meanings and options.

Thus, hegemonic articulation involves a negation of identity that tends to produce social antagonism. As hegemony involves antagonism and is a form of politics, it follows that politics is inextricably linked to social antagonism. However, this does not imply that political antagonists are necessarily enemies in the strict sense of the term. Indeed, as Mouffe argues, distinguishing between enemies and

---

[142] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 127-131.
[143] Howarth, D. (1995) Op. Cit. pp. 122-3.
[144] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 120.

adversaries permits us to link politics and social antagonism within liberal democracy:

> Once we accept the necessity of the political and the impossibility of a world without antagonism, what needs to be envisaged is how it is possible under those conditions to create or maintain a pluralist democratic order. Such an order is based upon a distinction between '*enemy*' and '*adversary*'. It requires that, within the context of the political community, the opponent should be considered not as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an adversary whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated. We will fight against his ideas but we will not question his right to defend them.[145]

As will be argued in *Chapter* 7, such a distinction may not aid agreement between the different discursive systems of the EU. However, Torfing observes that the intrinsic link between politics and social antagonism is challenged by the belief that politics should be tied rather to authority, which is contingent upon conflict/consensus in the sense that it does not necessarily imply the one or the other.[146] That said, Torfing holds that this argument is questionable in three respects that are relevant to this thesis.

First, authority is needed because of the presence of antagonistic conflicts, and is a way of ensuring governance in the face of it. Second, the attempt to identify politics with authority tends to ground politics in social phenomena themselves resulting from antagonistic struggles. Authority is normally conceived as based either on tradition (conservatism, as in Britain, or communitarianism, as in Continental Europe); on the formal rationality embodied in the legal framework of the state (liberalism, as in Britain); on the morality (Emile Durkheim), truthfulness (Habermas) or charisma (Max Weber) of those exercising power; or the anticipation of those subjected to the exercise of power that, in the normal course

---

[145] Mouffe, C. (1993) 'Introduction: For an Agonistic Pluralism', in C. Mouffe (ed) *The Return of the Political.* (London: Verso.) p. 4.
[146] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 121-122.

of events, compliance with regulations and actions will be forthcoming (David Easton).[147]

Common to all these different conceptions of the source of authority is the idea that something (tradition, or rationality, and so forth) makes people accept political decisions without protest. However, all these things which tie politics to a tacit rather than an explicit consensus are social 'facts' that are constructed in and through political struggles involving force and repression and thus, antagonism. That is, politics as authority hinges upon something which is itself the result of the workings of a more fundamental form of politics, defined as hegemonic struggles experienced in a context of social antagonism.[148]Hence, it follows that the success of either the British or Continental European vision of European union will be the consequence of a hegemonic struggle experienced in a context of social antagonism.

Third, there are no sources of authority that can ensure a total consensus that precludes the exclusion of a 'constitutive outside'. Tradition, rationality, and so forth, are always subject to negation, and thus, fail to provide an ultimate ground for everybody to reach agreement, or merely to accept the ruling of others. As in Britain, tradition and liberty are sources of authority that preclude the exclusion of Continental Europe. Hence, it follows that new sources of authority must be found that are based upon a different constitutive outside so that Britain and Continental Europe can reach agreement, or Britain must accept the sources of authority of Continental Europe as embodied in the EU framework (or vice versa). Such is the subject of *Chapter 6* and *Chapter 7* of this research.

---

[147] Ibid. p. 122.
[148] Ibid.

An alternative conception of politics in terms of 'authoritative decisions' also presents a challenge to the discourse-theoretical emphasis upon the intrinsic link between politics and social antagonism. There may be a concern that the consequence of such an intrinsic link could be the failure to acknowledge 'routine politics' in the sense of minor policy changes, unanimous and routine decisions, rules, norms, procedures, and so forth, that exist in a highly institutional context and do not incite any antagonistic conflicts.[149] This would be a significant problem for this thesis because, as the domestic politics approach by George et al illustrated in *Chapter 2*, the routine politics of member states have had a serious impact upon the process of European integration.[150]Moreover, George et al observe that British routine politics has posed a particularly serious obstacle to the process of European integration because it has tended to conflict with the routine politics of the other member states.[151] However, there is no such problem for a discourse-theoretical approach, which in contrast to all previous analyses, conceives such institutionalized contexts as 'sedimented' discourses.[152] That is, routine politics constitutes relatively permanent and durable discourses resulting from political and social practices. Thus, as explained in *Section 2.1*, in contrast to the structural approaches, such institutionalized contexts are conceived as *discourses* rather than *structures*. As such, there are no qualitative distinctions between these discourses, only differences in their degree of stability.[153]

---

[149] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 122-123.
[150] See, for example: George, S. (ed.) (1992) *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). pp. 206-7.
[151] See, for example: George, S. (1998) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). p. 278-9.
[152] To elucidate, hegemonic discourses have become sedimented when we no longer question them or recognise them as discourses. That is, a discourse has become sedimented (and hegemonic) when we no longer feel any opposition between it and reality because it has succeeded in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality itself. See: Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 31-5, Howarth, D. (1995) Op Cit. p. 132, Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 69-71, 121-123. For further discussion of the discourse-theoretical approach to subject and agency, see: Howarth, D. (2000) Op. Cit. pp. 121-22, Howarth, D. (1995) Op. Cit. pp 123, 132; Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 135-154.
[153] Howarth, D. (1995) Op Cit. p. 132.

However, as Torfing emphasizes, not all routine decisions are, at bottom, political:

> The degree of social sedimentation of a certain context of decision making might be so high that the element of conflict and antagonism tends to evaporate. In that case we should simply speak of social routines rather than routine politics.[154]

Nevertheless, as routine politics are discursively constructed, they are still open to change. That is, the term 'routine' does not involve the eradication of 'undecidability'. As Torfing affirms, the following of rules is necessarily based upon constitutive interpretations.[155] In all, undecidability penetrates rule-governed decisions and actions, and thus, the difference between routine politics and the more fundamental forms of politics is eroded.[156]Indeed, it can be observed that British routine politics was changed significantly by British neo-liberalism as a result of its attack upon social democracy and the bureaucratic, restricting and inefficient 'nanny state'. However, this development moved British routine politics away from the more social democratic and communautaire practices of the EU and Continental Europe rather than closer to them.

From a discourse-theoretical perspective, what might appear as unanimous, routine decisions in the British state might be revealed as the source of all kinds of frustrated desires, unstated criticism, and endlessly deferred confrontations. Thus, the EU may appeal to these scattered, micro-level resistances. However, without any external influence, such seldom become major upheavals because of the normalizing aspect of the power strategies that penetrate such social and political institutions. The primary objective of these strategies is to efface the traces of the contingent political interventions constituting the social. The

---

[154] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 123.
[155] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 122-123.
[156] Ibid. p. 123. On the undecidability of rule-governed decisions and actions, see: Derrida, J. (1988) [1977] Op. Cit. pp. 116, 149-50; Derrida, J. (1992) Op. Cit; Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 171-4, Laclau, E. (1991) 'Community and its Paradoxes: Richard Rorty's Liberal Utopia', in Miami Theory Collective (eds) *Community at Loose Ends*. (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press). pp. 89-90; Rorty, R. (1989) Op. Cit. pp. 3-22, and Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 67-69.

politically constructed is presented as normal or natural, and resistance is constructed as deviant or unnatural.[157] Following Foucault, subtle logics of self-concealment are deployed by political power strategies making political decisions appear unopposed, *routine* decisions.[158]

4.2. The limits of discourse

As the following two sections illustrate, the limits of a discourse (or discursive formation or a discursive system of identity) are established in terms of the exclusion of a 'radical and threatening otherness' not presenting itself as yet another difference, but rather, expanding a chain of equivalence. That is, construction of the limits of a discourse involves the construction of a social antagonism. This is significant to this thesis because it is proposed in *Chapter 5* that the construction of the limits of British discourse has involved the construction of a social antagonism with Europe.

To establish what keeps different discourses apart, it is necessary to establish what keeps them together. The possibility of a fundamental ground as the source of all differences within the discourse is inevitably rejected by discourse theory. However, that the limits of a discourse can be defined in terms of what lies beyond them is also rejected. If what is beyond is merely other differences, then it is impossible to establish if these differences are internal or external to the discourse in question.[159] Hence, it is necessary to conceive how a discourse establishes its limits by excluding a 'radical (and threatening) otherness' that has no common measure with the differential system from which it is excluded, and

---

[157] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 123.
[158] See: Foucault, M. (1985) [1969] Op. Cit, Foucault, M. (1986) [1976] *Power/Knowledge*. (Brighton: Harvester).
[159] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 124.

thus, that poses a constant threat to the very system.[160]This radical otherness simultaneously constitutes and negates the limits and identity of the discourse from which it is excluded. Derived from Staten[161], Laclau calls this radical otherness the 'constitutive outside'. Since this constitutive outside is coterminous with 'social antagonism', it once again follows that social antagonism is simultaneously the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of discursive systems of identity.[162] This thesis will now explain how this constitutive outside is discursively constructed because this is crucial to our understanding of how 'Europe' became the Other for the British identity, as presented in *Chapter 5*.

4.3. Social antagonism and the relations of equivalence and difference

It is at this point that Laclau and Mouffe's conception of the 'relation of equivalence' (as described in *Section 2.2.1.*) becomes relevant. The constitutive outside introduces a radical negativity that cannot be presented directly, as a positive difference, but only indirectly through chains of equivalence which subvert the differential character of the discursive identities.[163] The differential character of social identities collapses when they become inscribed in chains of equivalence that constructs them in terms of a certain - though not 'essential' - identical something or sameness. Hence, all that the excluded have in common is their negation of the discursive form in question. That is, the chain of equivalence has no positive identity as it annuls all positivity of the excluded element and thus, produces negativity as such.[164] Thus, the constitutive outside of a discourse 'A', which is discursively constructed by the expansion of a chain of equivalence, is neither 'B' nor 'non-A', but 'anti-A'. As argued in *Chapter 5*, the constitutive outside

---

[160] Laclau, E. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 151.
[161] Staten, H. (1985) [1984] *Wittgenstein and Derrida*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell). pp. 15-9.
[162] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 124.
[163] See: Laclau, E and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 128-9.

of the British identity is 'anti-Britain'. As such, the British identity is established in a confrontation with a threatening constitutive outside which prevents it from being what it is.

In their formula for social antagonism, Laclau and Mouffe emphasize that it is not that a negative equivalential pole confronts a positive differential pole because, faced with an external threat, a certain sameness of the differential moments will be established.[165] A relevant illustration would be the discursive effects of the external threat of Nazism confronting the allied powers during the Second World War. Faced with a common enemy, the British and European national governments emphasized their common commitment to peace, freedom and democracy. The content of these common values was emptied to the degree that they became empty signifiers; merely symbolizing a communitarian space deprived of its fullness due to the presence of the evil forces of Nazism.

Such an external threat, such a 'constitutive outside', could bring Britain and Continental Europe together again, leading to the necessary common supranational commitment to democratic values. The emptying of conflicting national contents of signifiers to a mere common symbolization of a communitarian space could enable the successful integration of Europe. Following Preston, the emerging groupings of 'Japan/Asia' and 'USA/Latin America' within the broader global system, as a result of the global dynamics of change, could be conceived as providing this external threat, this constitutive outside, to the small national economies of Britain and Continental Europe. For Preston and neo-functional accounts, it is 'rational' for the small nations of Europe to integrate in response to the threat posed by these new economic blocs.

---

[164] See: Ibid. pp. 128-9.
[165] Ibid. p. 128.

However, this thesis is sceptical that such threats to capitalist nationalist economies can provide the necessary constitutive outside to invoke a common political European commitment to democratic values.[166] Indeed, after the defeat of Nazism, it was the *political* concern for curbing the totalitarian logic of nationalism, and preserving peace, freedom and democracy - rather than the concern for *economic* competitiveness in the global capitalist economy, as implied by Preston and neo-functionalism - that instigated the Continental European project of European integration in the first place.

Returning to the construction of a constitutive outside, it is important to note that it is because a negative identity cannot be represented in a direct way (that is, positively); it can only be represented indirectly, through an equivalence between its differential moments. Hence, an ambiguity penetrates every relation of equivalence because two terms, to be equivalent, must be different - otherwise, there will be a simple identity.[167]Hence, during the Second World War, to be equivalent in one respect, the European allies had to differ in other respects. Moreover, it must be emphasized that it is not only the moments articulated within the allied political discourse that are either differential or equivalential: the constitutive outside of Nazism, which the allied discourse constructed as equivalent with other evil forces, had a differential character in that it was considered to be one of many competing ideologies. Thus, all social identities are cross-points between the logic of equivalence and the logic of difference.

---

[166] In accordance with the predictions of Preston and the logic of spill-over of neo-functionalism, this economic threat will lead to European economic integration, and this process will inevitably lead to supranational political integration. However, even if this is so, in contrast to Preston's assumptions and in accordance with many of George's observations, there is no reason to believe that such capitalist-economic concerns will spill-over into a new political and universal concern for democratic values.

[167] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 128.

Furthermore, neither the logic of equivalence nor the logic of difference will dominate completely.[168]They mutually subvert each other. However, the undecidable relation between the two logics can be temporarily fixed in a determinate hierarchy. Which of the two logics achieves predominance in this hierarchy depends upon the political struggle over hegemony in this area.[169]Here, there are two extreme possible outcomes.

First, the logic of equivalence may dominate. As a consequence, political plurality is significantly reduced. The space of differentiality is narrowed by a friend-enemy distinction, and thus, the discursive space is divided into camps.[170] The antagonism does not admit 'tertium quid'. For example, the logic of equivalence dominated within the allied discourse during the Second World War. The all-penetrating antagonism between the allies and their constitutive outside did not allow tertium quid. The underlying dictum was 'if you are not with us, you are against us'.

Another example would be the discursive effects of the external threat of Eastern Communism upon the discourse of Western Capitalism. Once again, the space of differentiality was narrowed by the expansion of the 'friend-enemy' distinction. The discursive space was divided into camps. As Ettienne Tassin observes, the Yalta Conference in February 1945 subsequently divided Europe into 'democratic' and 'socialist' systems.[171] It can also be argued that, in Britain, the external threat of Communism led to Continental Europe *per se* (and thus, the EU) being identified as the enemy because its social democratic ideas were perceived as equivalent to socialism by the neo-liberal hegemonic project of Thatcherism. Drawing upon the

---

[168] Ibid. p. 129.
[169] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 126.
[170] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 129-30.

broader divide that defined the identity of the West against the East during the Cold War, the Thatcherite project narrowed the space of differentiality by constructing an antagonism between British liberalism and the threat posed to them by European socialism. By constructing them within a chain of equivalence that represented 'anti-Britain', this neo-liberal project collapsed the differential character of Communism, socialism, and social democracy. As identified as the cause of these anti-British ideas, Continental Europe was negated as a moment of this equivalential chain. In due course, as *Chapter 5* demonstrates, the process of European integration was also discursively constructed as equivalent to this anti-British threat, as reflected in the speeches of Powell and Thatcher. In confrontation with this constitutive outside, the differential character of Thatcherite ideas and policies was also collapsed as they became discursively constructed as equivalent to 'Britishness'.

Second, the logic of difference may dominate.[172]Here, political plurality is significantly increased. An example would be the political development of the allied European powers after the defeat of the external threat of Nazism. Here, the differential space was expanded and thus, there was a true proliferation of legitimate differences. In due course, the plurality and often opposing ideas, meanings, and interests returned to the different national discourses of Europe.

Thus, in sum, when the allied forces were fighting against Nazism, they united all the anti-fascist elements under the signs of 'peace', 'freedom', and 'democracy'. Within the spontaneous experience of the unity of this fight, the crucial fact passed unnoticed that the same words used by all participants referred to the different discourses of Britain and Continental Europe. As Žižek illustrates, this

---

[171] Tassin, E. (1992) 'Europe: A Political Community?', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. (London: Verso). p. 171.

can also be explained by means of the Lacanian opposition, 'subject of the enunciated/subject of the enunciation': the same enunciated (demands for peace, freedom, democracy, and so forth) is supported by a different position of enunciation, is spoken from a totally different horizon of meaning.[173] Hence, after Nazism had been defeated, and the project for a unified, peaceful, free, and democratic Europe was instigated, there began a crucial hegemonic fight for the appropriation of these 'floating signifiers' at the supranational level.

4.4. Social antagonism and dislocation

In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, social antagonism is held to constitute the limits of every objectivity and can be depicted thus:

A ← anti-A

Figure 2: Social antagonism as the negative external force that constitutes the limits of every objectivity[174]

For this conception of social antagonism, it is the external enemy (for example, Continental Europe) that prevents identity 'A' (for example, the British identity) from becoming fully sutured. However, Žižek observes that what is negated in social antagonism is always already negated.[175] That is, there is a force of negativity that is prior to social antagonism. This force is the 'Lacanian Real', the traumatic kernel that always resists symbolization. Thus, in Lacanian terms, it is

---

[172] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 130.
[173] Žižek, S. (1990b) Op. Cit. p. 61.
[174] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 128.
[175] See: Žižek, S. (1990a) Op. Cit. pp. 249-60.

necessary to distinguish antagonism as *real* from the social *reality* of the antagonistic fight.[176] As Torfing depicts:

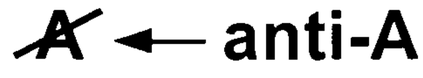

Figure 3: The Real as the internal negative force prior to the external negative force of social antagonism[177]

Here, the bar through the 'A' signifies the traumatic effect of the Real. A-barred is negated by 'anti-A', and the result is the negation of a negation.[178]

Žižek's Lacanian conception elucidates how social antagonism is constitutive of social identity. The point is not that 'we' are nothing but the drive to annihilate the antagonistic force that prevents us from achieving our full identity. Rather, the crucial point is that the antagonistic force is held responsible for the blockage of our full identity, and this permits the externalization of our constitutive lack as subjects to the negating Other, which thus becomes the positive embodiment of our self-blockage.[179] Hence, the British Eurosceptic struggle against European integration is necessarily filled out by the illusion that afterwards, when 'European interference' is retracted, Britain can achieve its full identity, realize its full potential, and so forth.

Welcoming Žižek's constructive critique of their conception of social antagonism,[180] Laclau agrees that social antagonism should be conceived as a discursive response to the dislocation of the social order. Thus, it is redefined in terms of the presence of a constitutive outside which, at the same time,

---

[176] Ibid. p. 253.
[177] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 128.
[178] Žižek, S. (1990a) Op. Cit. p. 252.

constitutes and denies the identity of the inside.[181] Hence, as illustrated below in *Sections 5.1-2.*, social antagonism plays an important role in the construction of the spatiality of 'myths' and 'social imaginaries'.

In sum, discourse theory has shifted its emphasis from the conception of social antagonism as dislocation *per se* to the affirmation of social antagonism as a discursive *response* to dislocation. Moreover, it is now argued that a severe dislocation may not necessarily be responded to by the construction of a social antagonism, by the detection of the cause of the dislocation serving as an enemy.[182] However, emphasis upon the 'stabilizing function' of social antagonism does not expel social antagonism as a *source* of dislocation. Thus, every identity is dislocated insofar as it depends on an outside that both denies that identity, and at the same time, provides its condition of possibility.[183] Consequently, social antagonism is double-edged because it constitutes and sustains identity by positing a threat to it. For instance, in Britain, the threat of an envisaged intruding Continental European 'socialist super-state' helps unify and sustain a British identity based upon the contradictory liberal notion of a limited and national sovereign state. However, such antagonistic forces can cease to have a stabilizing function and become a major source of dislocation.

This chapter will now examine the discourse-theoretical approach to ideology. Discourse theory questions orthodox conceptions and develops an alternative approach in which ideology is conceived in terms of the construction of particular discursive forms within a totalizing horizon with universalist pretensions.[184] Therefore, this examination will expose the limitations of previous analyses of

---

[179] Ibid. p. 253.
[180] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. xvi.
[181] Ibid. p. 17.
[182] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 131.

British Euroscepticism as an ideological phenomenon[185], as well as provide an alternative understanding. It will also address the concern that discourse theory lacks a critical and normative edge because it rejects the traditional Marxist conception of ideology as a form of 'false consciousness'. As a consequence, there has been the additional concern that it cannot criticise existing discourses or ask where social ideas actually hail from.[186]

5.0. The question of ideology

For Laclau and Mouffe, ideology plays a crucial role in the construction of hegemonic discourse because the formation of a resilient 'metaphorical' hegemony necessitates an ideological closure. An examination of this function of ideology questions the traditional Marxist conception.[187] As Torfing illustrates, there are two classical Marxist approaches to ideology that tend to be combined. First, ideology is conceived as a particular 'supranational level' within the social totality, and second, it is identified as false consciousness.[188] Inspired by post-structuralism, both these approaches are held to be problematic because of their *essentialist* grounding of 'society' and 'social agency'. That is, post-structuralism rejects the essentialist conception of 'society' as a unitary, fully intelligible, structural totality, divided into a base and superstructure. In contrast, the structural totality is always surrounded by an 'excess of meaning' which it cannot master.

---

[183] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 39.
[184] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 114.
[185] For example, as indicated above and described in *Chapter 2*, Preston suggests that British Euroscepticism reflects the success of an 'official' ideology, a 'false' consciousness that has obscured the 'reality' of the ruling class following its own interests to the detriment of economic and political development. See, for example: Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 21-3, 29-31175, 197.
[186] On this question, see also: Eagleton T. (1991) *Ideology: An Introduction*. (London: Verso). p. 219; Howarth. D. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 131; Howarth. D. (2000) Op. Cit. pp. 122-4, and Norris, C. (1993) *The Truth about Postmodernism*. (Oxford: Blackwell). pp. 289-92.
[187] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 113.
[188] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 89.

Thus, 'society' as a unitary and intelligible object that grounds its own partial process is an impossibility.[189]

In addition:

> The same excess of meaning, the same precarious character of any structuration that we find in the domain of the social order, is also to be found in the domain of subjectivity.[190]

Hence, also rejected is the essentialist notion of 'social agency' as a 'self-identical Subject' endowed with a set of objective interests on the basis of which the actual Subject can be judged. Thus, the theoretical basis of the Marxist concept of 'false consciousness' collapses when we attempt to specify the real, non-ideological identity of the Subject and discover nothing but the kaleidoscopic movement of differences.[191]

To provide a more instructive anti-essentialist conception of ideology, discourse theory looks to the Lacanian psychoanalytical approach developed by Žižek.[192] Following Žižek, for Laclau, the problem with the Marxist conception of ideology is that the 'extra-ideological' reality is always already ideological. We have no access to the 'real world' except through its construction as a discursive form with more or less ideological systems of representation. Rejection of the possibility of an objective world of real essences against which we can measure and finally demask ideological forms of representations robs the Marxist concept of ideology of its meaning.[193]

---

[189] Ibid. p. 90.
[190] Ibid. p. 92.
[191] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 113.
[192] See, for example: Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. See also: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 113-118.
[193] See: Laclau, E. (1996) 'The Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology', *Journal of Political Ideologies*. Volume 1, No. 3. pp. 210-3.

However, the rejection of essentialist conceptions of 'society' and 'social agency' as objective essences does not imply that the concept of ideology should be abandoned.[194] Indeed, the concept is retained precisely because both society and social agency are frequently misconceived as fully constituted essential unities. It is maintained in an inverted sense of the 'non-recognition of the precarious character of any positivity, of the impossibility of any ultimate suture'.[195]Any attempt to expand a hegemonic discourse necessarily invokes a totalizing reduction of the infinite play of meaning. The ideological consists precisely in the discursive forms seeking to construct society and social agency as decidable within a totalizing horizon that projects on to a particular discursive form an impossible fullness and transparency. The ideological is 'the will' to totality of any totalizing discourse.[196] As Laclau asserts, the operation of closure is impossible but also necessary: it is *impossible* because of the constitutive dislocation which lies in the heart of any structural arrangement, and it is *necessary* because there would be no meaning at all without that fictitious fixing of meaning.[197]

Thus, for example, it follows that 'epiphenomenalism' and 'class reductionism' provide ideological support for Marxism.[198] That is, the Marxist notion of the self-developing economic substratum (epiphenomenalism) and a privileged social class (class reductionism), which together will cause a full emancipated society, clearly involves ideological totalization.[199] Another example of such ideological totalization is the Western European belief that the unfettered rule of the capitalist market mechanism will solve the problems identified as 'Euro-sclerosis'.[200]

---

[194] See: Howarth. D. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 131, Howarth. D. (2000) Op. Cit. pp. 122-4.
[195] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 92.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Laclau, E. (1996) Op. Cit. p. 205.
[198] The concepts 'epiphenomenalism' and 'class reductionism' are examined in: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 20-26, 299, 301.
[199] Ibid. p. 114.

The discourse-theoretical conception of ideology informs further important functions, those of 'myths' and 'social imaginaries'.[201]

5.1. Myths

A myth is a principle of reading of a given situation.[202] The condition for the emergence of myth is structural dislocation, and the function of myth is to suture the dislocated space by constructing a new space of representation.[203]That is, the role of myth is hegemonic: 'it involves forming a new objectivity by means of the rearticulation of the dislocated elements'.[204] Thus, the gap opened by the dislocation of a structure will be filled by emerging hegemonic projects that have the character of myths.

Laclau claims that myths are constitutive of any possible society:

> ... any space formed as a principle for the reordering of a dislocated structure's elements is mythical. Its mythical character is given by its radical discontinuity with the dislocations of the dominant structural forms.[205]

For example, the welfare state was a myth aimed at reconstructing the operation of capitalist societies following the Great Depression.[206] Relevant to this research, British 'parliamentary sovereignty' and 'the British nation' are myths that have upheld British political legitimacy, economic stability and the social order in the face of the decline of the British Empire and Britain's dominant and independent role in the global economy.

---

[200] Ibid.
[201] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 61-5.
[202] Ibid. p. 61.
[203] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 115, 303.
[204] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 61.
[205] Ibid. p. 67.
[206] Ibid.

However, myths are more than a description of a utopia in the sense of a blueprint for an achieved or achievable society. The concrete or literal content of myth represents something different from itself: the very *principle* of a fully achieved literality.[207]That is, myth is a metaphor for an absent fullness - a fullness that cannot be realized at present.[208]The metaphoric character of myth permits expression of the very form of fullness itself beyond any concrete or literal content.[209] The indeterminateness of the expression of fullness opens a space for the inverted representation of all kinds of structural dislocation. That is, myth tends to provide a surface on which unsatisfied demands are inscribed. If the surface of inscription is hegemonized by what is inscribed upon it, then the moment of inscription will be eliminated in favour of the literality of what is inscribed. If instead the expression of the every form of fullness continues to dominate, it becomes the unlimited horizon of any social demand. Thus, myth is transformed into a 'social imaginary'.[210]

5.2. Social imaginaries

A social imaginary is a horizon in the sense that it is not one object among others, but rather the condition of possibility for the emergence of any object.[211]For example, Christian millennium, the concept of 'progress' held by the Enlightenment and positivism, and the communist dream of a classless society, are all social imaginaries. As such, a social imaginary is a myth in which the fullness of the surface of inscription continues to dominate. Consequently, the somewhat limited myth is transformed into an unlimited horizon for the inscription

---

[207] See: Ibid. p. 63.
[208] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 115.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 63-4.
[211] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 115.

of any social demand.[212] To elucidate, as a hegemonic strategy gains authority, more and more subject positions are reconstructed with reference to its logic. Thus, it becomes the framework through which more and more identifications become possible. At its highest moment of authority, it shifts from being a 'myth' to being a 'social imaginary' in the sense that it is no longer just a list of political positions, a bloc of concrete social agents, or one alternative to many, but the only possible alternative to total chaos.[213] Indeed, the success of a hegemonic project depends on its ability to operate as a social imaginary in this way.

Moreover, as a hegemonic strategy becomes a social imaginary, it becomes embodied in different key institutions, and thus, it ensures the incitement of identifications within its framework in as many different sites in the social as possible. This is a crucial aspect of its operation: the constitution of a social identity is an act of power and identity as such *is* power.[214]To the extent that a hegemonic discourse becomes an institutionalized horizon, it rules out alternative frameworks for identification as increasingly illegitimate, immoral, irrational and finally, incoherent.[215] Thus, institutionalization always involves an exercise of power: the brutal exclusion - whether concealed or explicit - of alternative frameworks.

Myths and social imaginaries conceptualize the ideological forms of discourse that aim to construct society and social agency as positive and fully sutured identities.[216] Social imaginaries provide a horizon for meaning and action that is structured by tendentially empty and essentially ambiguous signifiers[217], such as 'democracy', 'liberty', 'peace, 'freedom', 'order', 'the nation', 'the people', 'the

---

[212] Ibid. p. 305.
[213] Smith, A. M. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 171.
[214] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 31.
[215] Smith, A. M. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 172.
[216] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 115.

national interest', revolution, 'unity', 'European union', and so forth. At a less ambitious level, myth provides a 'reading principle', embodied in a set of norms, values, and so forth, which helps to constitute a new objectivity. For both, the intervention of an external hegemonic principle would lead to the construction of a totalizing and reductive discourse that would seek a metaphysical closure. Hence, the essentializing gesture of ideology involves the recognition of the contingent character of any positivity and of the impossibility of any final suture. That is, ideology involves the forgetting of the *undecidability* that prevents closure and ensures the limited and precarious nature of the decidable forms of social identity. It constructs the 'real world' as a set of fully constituted essences and denies that these essences are contingent results of political decisions taken in an undecidable terrain.[218]

5.3. Ideology and social antagonism

The discourse-theoretical conception of 'social antagonism' is crucial to the construction and destruction of the spatiality of myths and social imaginaries. As Laclau explains, myths and social imaginaries aim to reconcile the social field in the face of structural dislocation, which involves 'the disruption of the structure by forces operating *outside* it'.[219] They provide a homogeneous space of representation because all forces of negativity have become displaced to an outside that is both constitutive and subversive of the unity of the inside.

However, myths and social imaginaries fail to function as surfaces of inscription as soon as they are put into question by external events: 'For longer or shorter periods they have a certain elasticity beyond which we witness their inexorable

---

[217] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 65.
[218] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 115-6.

decline'.[220]Their final breakdown occurs when the spatial forms of representation and the discursive structure they support are confronted with a set of undomesticable events. The presence of events that can neither be symbolized by the discursive formation nor inscribed at the level of the social imaginary, undermines the social order precisely because its ability to sustain order is jeopardized.[221] For example, the persistence of low economic growth rates led to the questioning of the institutional matrix of the modern welfare state.[222]Similarly, and analogous to the predictions of Preston and neo-functionalist accounts, Britain may finally accept supranational European integration if the process of globalisation undermines the British myths of political and economic sovereignty.

5.4. Ideological fantasies

The concept of social antagonism also plays a crucial role in the development of the discourse-theoretical conceptual couplet of ideology and 'ideological fantasy'[223]. As Žižek explains, ideology involves a certain mis- or non-recognition on the part of subjects.[224] Here, the point is not that people possess a distorted representation of reality, because the extra-ideological reality is always already ideological: we do not have any access to the real world except through its construction as a discursive form within more or less ideological systems of representation. As Peter Sloterdijk argues, nor is the point that most people possess a distorted representation of reality because many people no longer trust ideological truths or take ideological propositions seriously.[225] Rather, the point is that even when we keep an ironical distance from totalizing ideological

---

[219] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 50.
[220] Ibid. p. 67.
[221] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 130.
[222] Ibid.
[223] For Žižek, ideological fantasies structure what we call reality and determine the contours of desire. (Kay, S. (2003) Op. Cit. p. 163.)
[224] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 32-3.

representations, we still act according to them. That is, the illusion is not on the side of *knowledge*, but on the side of what people are *doing*. As Žižek explains:

> ... what they overlook, what they misrecognize, is not the reality but the illusion which is structuring their reality, their real social activity. They know very well how things really are, but still they are doing it as if they did not know. The illusion is therefore double: it consists in overlooking the illusion which is structuring our real, effective relationship with reality. And this overlooked, unconscious illusion may be called the *ideological fantasy*.[226]

Thus, Žižek claims that we act 'as if' the totalizing and reductive forms of ideology are true and serious, although we know that they are not. In contrast to Marx's definition of ideology, 'They do not know it, but they are doing it',[227] Žižek argues that 'They know that, in their activity, they are following an illusion, but still they are doing it'.[228] For example, we already know that our idea of freedom is masking a particular form of exploitation, but we still continue to follow this idea of freedom.

For Žižek, the crucial point is that *ideological fantasy is a means for an ideology to take its own failure into account in advance*.[229]At the level of knowledge, ideological fantasy compensates for the observation that people are not convinced by the totalizing and reductive propositions of ideology. The social is structured around a constitutive impossibility and is traversed by social antagonisms. The function of ideological fantasy is to mask the void opened by the impossible and antagonistic character of society, which can neither be integrated into the symbolic order nor represented at the level of the imaginary.[230]

---

[225] See: Sloterdijk, P. (1983) *Kritik der Zynischen Vernuft*. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp).
[226] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. pp. 32-3.
[227] Marx provided this elementary definition of ideology ('Sie wissen das nicht, aber sie tun es') in Marx, K. (1977) [1867-94] *Capital*, Volume I. (London: Lawrence & Wishart). As referred to and referenced in: Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 28, 234.
[228] Ibid. p. 33.
[229] Ibid. p. 126.
[230] Ibid. p. 126-7.

That is, ideological fantasy is the safety net of ideology and thus, provides the ultimate support of 'reality'.[231]

Therefore, we act 'as if', not because it is rational, but because the masking of the failure of ideology allows us to be freed from facing up to the impossible and antagonistic character of the social. This reveals ideological fantasy as a crucial counterpart to the concept of social antagonism: ideological fantasy is precisely the way the antagonistic fissure is masked. That is, *ideological fantasy is a means for an ideology to take its own failure into account in advance.*[232] As Laclau and Mouffe propose, 'Society doesn't exist': the social is always an inconsistent field structured around a constitutive possibility, traversed by an antagonism. This proposition implies that every process of identification conferring upon us a fixed socio-symbolic identity is ultimately doomed to fail. The function of ideological fantasy is to mask this inconsistency, the fact that 'Society doesn't exist', and thus, to compensate us for the failed identification.[233]

In sum, following Lacan, the last support of what we call 'reality' is fantasy.[234] In the opposition between dream and reality, the Lacanian thesis contends that fantasy is on the side of reality: it is the support that gives consistency to what we call reality.[235] 'Reality' is a fantasy-construction that enables us to mask the Real of our desire.[236] Žižek demonstrates that it is the same with ideology:

> Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself: an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel.[237]

---

[231] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 117.
[232] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 126.
[233] See: Ibid. p. 127.
[234] Ibid. p 47.
[235] Ibid. p 44.
[236] Ibid. p. 45. See: Lacan, J. (1979) [1977]. Op. Cit. Chapters 5-6. pp. 53-78.
[237] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p 45.

This proposition is conceptualized by Laclau and Mouffe as 'antagonism': a traumatic social division that cannot be symbolized. Thus, the function of ideology is not to offer us a point of escape from our reality but to offer us the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel. Hence, the difference with Marxism is thus: in the predominant Marxist perspective the ideological gaze is a *partial* gaze overlooking the *totality* of social relations, whereas in the Lacanian perspective, ideology rather designates *a totality set on effacing the traces of its own impossibility*.[238]

In all, this Lacanian approach has major implications for the critique of ideology, and thus, the discourse-theoretical approach to British Euroscepticism developed by this thesis. The main consequence of the conceptual couplet of ideology and ideological fantasy is that the political critique of ideology must involve more than simply 'demonstrating how a given ideological field is a result of a montage of heterogeneous "floating signifiers", of their totalization through the intervention of certain "nodal points"'.[239] Rather, in order to undermine the grip of ideology, we need to account for how ideology implies, manipulates and produces a pre-ideological 'enjoyment'[240] structured in fantasy.[241]That is, we must expose the negative properties attributed to 'Europe' to be nothing but a response to the constitutive impossibility of the social, which produces in advance the ultimate failure of ideology. To this end, we must invert the linking of causality as perceived by the gaze of ideological edifices.[242]

---

[238] Ibid. p. 49.
[239] Ibid. p. 125.
[240] See: Ibid. pp. 124-6; Žižek, S. (1990b) Op. Cit. pp. 51-7, and Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 117-8, and Žižek, S. (1990b) Op. Cit. pp. 51-52. See also: Kay, S. (2003) Op. Cit. pp. 30, 33, 151, 167.
[241] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 125.
[242] See: Ibid. p. 127.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that 'discourse', 'hegemony', and 'social antagonism' are the key conceptual and analytical tools of a discourse-theoretical approach to political research. With regard to 'discourse', following Derrida, this concept was defined as a decentred structure in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed. As discourse is conceived in terms of an ensemble of signifying sequences, both physical objects and social practices are meaningful parts of discourse. Similar to Wittgenstein's concept of language-games, the concept of discourse designates the constitution of a signifying order that is *not* reducible to its linguistic or its extra-linguistic aspects.[243]

Discourse theory also emphasizes that the meaning-given relations of discourse are social and *not* logical or natural.[244] To elucidate, Hegelian dialectics conceives the connection between different notions as part of the progressive unfolding of Reason, while the naturalist scheme conceives the relations between different identities as given by nature (that is, the 'material conditions of life'). Both these conceptions deny the presence of a discursive terrain for the social construction of our world. All worldly phenomena have an essence that is there for us to discover (although we might not have direct access to it).

In contrast to such essentialist conceptions of identity, discourse theory claims that social identity is constructed in and through 'hegemonic practices' of articulation, which partially fix the meaning of social identities by inscribing them in the differential system of a particular discourse. Here, the word 'hegemonic' in the term 'hegemonic practices' means hegemonic in *intent* rather than hegemonic in

---

[243] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1987) Op. Cit. pp. 82-3.

effect. Hence, 'hegemonic practices' refers to attempts to dis- and re-articulate social elements in and through antagonistic struggles in order to become hegemonic. As we have seen, 'hegemony' is the achievement of such leadership by providing a persuasive and credible redescription of the world through the expansion of a discourse that partially fixes meaning around nodal points.

The discourse-theoretical approach also emphasizes that hegemonic practices are constitutive of *all* social identity. Here, the crucial point is that the discourse-theoretical conception of hegemony leads to the affirmation of the irreducible and constitutive character of difference and thus, to the abandoning of the essentialist reduction of difference to identity. Hence, the starting point of political analysis is 'difference': identity is a result of the hegemonization of a field of differential subject positions, rather than an embodiment of a pregiven, paradigmatic interest under which a whole lot of other interests and identities can be subsumed.

Thus, it can be concluded that, whereas hegemonic practices of articulation constitute discourse, the irreducible play of signification within discourse provides the condition of possibility of hegemonic practices. This suggests that there is no room for hegemonic practices of articulation within a fully sutured structure where the play of signification is suppressed by the founding centre. 'Articulation' presupposes the constitutive unfixity of discourse - an unfixity affirmed by the proposition that, in the absence of a transcendental signified, the hegemonic practices of articulation result only in a partial fixation of meaning. In sum, the discourse-theoretical concepts of discourse and hegemony are mutually conditioned in the sense that hegemonic practice shapes and reshapes

---

[244] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1982) 'Recasting Marxism: Hegemony and New Political Movements', *Socialist Review*, Volume 12, November. p. 98.

discourse, which in turn, provides the conditions of possibility for hegemonic articulation.

In addition, both discourse and hegemony are mutually conditioned by the discourse-theoretical concept of 'social antagonism'. Social antagonisms are discursively constructed through hegemonic practices of articulation that *unify* discourse. As was illustrated, following Foucault, the concept of hegemony accounts for the unity of discourse in terms of a 'regularity of dispersion'. However, social antagonism establishes the constitutive *limits* of discourse, as well as distinguishing hegemonic articulations from other articulations. That is, the boundaries of a particular discourse are constructed by the exclusion of a discursive exteriority that threatens the particular discourse in question. The exclusion of such an antagonistic force is the *sine qua non* of hegemonic practices of articulation.

In social antagonism, this chapter has shown how 'the Other' prevents identity from being fully constituted. As identity is threatened by an antagonistic force, social antagonism puts into question any objectivity. That is, social antagonism constitutes the limits of every objectivity, which is revealed as partial and precarious objectification. Hence, if social antagonism helps to establish the boundaries of the discursive formation of society, it also, at the same time, prevents society from constituting an objective, rational and fully intelligible reality. Thus, social antagonism is simultaneously the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of society.

However, it is difficult to provide a clear definition of social antagonism because it collapses the differential aspect of language. It can only exists as a metaphorical

disruption of ‘natural’ language. This explains why social science can help explain the conditions of possibility of social antagonism, but fails to account for social antagonism as such. Social antagonism involves a loss of meaning that cannot be symbolized. In place of a clear definition, social antagonism is depicted as: A-anti-A. Here, identity 'A' is threatened by the antagonistic force 'anti-A'. The result is the subversion of the identity 'A'. For example, and as this thesis illustrates in *Chapter 5*, the British identity is subverted by the threatening antagonizing force of Continental Europe and the process of European integration.

We now turn to *Part II*, which applies these discourse-theoretical concepts to the hypotheses of this thesis. Although it is acknowledged that these concepts are inter-related and mutually conditioned, *Chapter 4* focuses predominantly upon the concept of 'discourse', and *Chapter 5* upon 'social antagonism'.

Part II

A Discourse-Theoretical Approach

Chapter Four

The Floating Signifiers of Europe

"Hurry into being, integrated Europe of a myriad of regions, ruled by the golden thumb of subsidiarity, where no state need assert itself by building yet another set of borders".[1]

Zdena Tomin.

Introduction

As *Chapter 2* illustrated, previous approaches have observed various differences in *ideas* and *interests* between Britain and Continental Europe that have obstructed the process of European (political) integration. However, these analyses have ignored how this divergence reflects a difference in (hegemonic) discourse that is also reflected in a difference in *meanings*. Hence, in an examination of the debate upon the Maastricht Treaty (or 'Treaty on European Union' (TEU)) in 1991-3, this chapter will apply a discourse-theoretical approach to demonstrate how the process of European integration has been obstructed because Britain and Continental Europe have different discourses, and thus, conflicting understandings of the same concepts and principles. It is also

[1] Tomin, Z. (1992) *The Independent*, 29 December. Zdena Tomin is a novelist and former spokesperson for the Czech dissident group, Charter 77.

observed that successful European integration depends upon the way that EU initiatives resonate with these different discourses. In this sense, Britain has been perceived as an awkward or irrational partner because British discourse conflicts with those of Continental European discourse which tend to be embodied within the initiatives for European union. However, before this analysis begins, it is instructive to provide an overview of the British obstruction to European integration that culminated in its resistance to the political initiatives of the TEU.

1.0. An overview of the British obstruction to European political integration

With regard to European (political) integration, from the time of Britain's membership of the EC to the agreement upon the TEU, the British government had opposed European Political Union (EPU), a stronger European Parliament (EP), the social charter/chapter, Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and majority voting, especially in social and political spheres. Britain had defended decision-making by the veto rather than the vote in the European Council, and had tended to oppose the introduction of EC legislation by majority voting or 'qualified majority voting' (QMV) in favour of unanimity.

Britain had favoured unanimity rather than QMV because the latter would represent a move away from intergovernmentalism and towards supranationalism since it would provide the Commission with greater leverage in its dealings with the Council, and thus, it would have greater leverage over the national interests of member states. In addition, an increase in majority voting over the national veto and unanimity would represent a move towards the 'collectivist' discourse of Continental European republican democracy. That is, in opposition to the

principles of liberal individualism, majority voting allows the Council to become more than the aggregate of the individual member states. Hence, in accordance with the functionalist claims of Walter Hallstein, the first President of the Commission, the Council would have become a supranational 'institution of the Community' rather than a liberal-individualist or intergovernmental 'conference of governments'.[2]

Thus, an increase in majority voting produces a 'collectivist' and supranational institutional framework in two ways. First, it increases the leverage of the Commission over the Council because it would make it harder for the Council to reject its proposals. Thus, individual national interests would not obstruct proposals made in the supranational and collective interest of Europe. Second, as for Commission proposals, the decisions of the Council would reflect the collective and supranational European interest. The British preference for unanimity and the national veto as opposed to majority voting is particularly strong in relation to political and social policy. Britain has upheld the veto and unanimity to defend itself from EC political and social proposals that have tended to embody the conflicting political and social principles of Continental Europe, as examined below.

In contrast, Continental European countries had sought national rather than collective Community solutions to the economic recession of the 1970s. The perceived failure of these national strategies led to a renewed impetus for the political and supranational integration of Europe in order to develop a more collective and social democratic approach to economic recovery. However, in the mid-1970s, following the first enlargement of the EC with the membership of

Britain and Denmark, this new initiative was obstructed because these new members opposed majority voting. However, the legislative situation improved once again in the early 1980s as political and economic pressures mounted to complete the SEA. Many Community reports and proposals - from 'Tindemans' (1975) to the 'Three Wise Men' (1979) to 'Genscher-Colombo' (1981) - called for the use of the vote rather than the national veto in the Council as a step towards a more collective approach to international economic growth. As Hans-Dietrich Genscher declared in November 1981:

> The economic problems now confronting us go to the roots of our democracies and of the European Community. Nevertheless, we cannot focus our efforts solely upon economic issues. We must, instead, set our sights on the grand design of the political unification of Europe, for it is from that design that we shall draw the strength to act as one and take decisions, on economic matters and others, which will not simply paper over the cracks but provide forward-looking solutions.[3]

Such a strategy was evident within the draft TEU that was adopted by the EP (February 1984).[4] However, Britain did not welcome the political dimension of this draft, such as references to 'European union' and 'federalism'; to strengthening the powers of the EP; increasing the scope of QMV in the Council, and to more far-reaching provisions in the social sphere. In contrast to the Commission and other member states, the British neo-liberal (hegemonic) project held that such a perspective was regressive rather than progressive - it reflected the social democratic causes of economic crisis rather than a possible cure. For the British Government, neo-liberalism was the only solution for economic recovery, and thus, the EU should merely represent an open economic market of competing individual member states rather than an intervening, centralised (or 'federalist'), and bureaucratic social democratic 'superstate'. Thus, it is evident that international economic problems had invoked a renewed EC social democratic

---

[2] Hallstein, W. (1970) *L'Europe Inachevée* (Paris: Robert Laffont) p. 77.

strategy for the political and supranational integration of the EC, but as a result, an increase in British Euroscepticism.

For Britain, the greatest constitutional impact of the ratified TEU was that it extended the scope of EC legislation introduced by QMV in the Council. As developed further in *Chapter 5*, this move represented a significant supranational threat to British neo-liberalism and to national and parliamentary sovereignty. As Lady Thatcher declared:

> By extending EC majority voting, it (the TEU) will undermine our parliamentary and legal institutions, both far older than those in the Community.[5]

Here, as for Winston Churchill below, we can also observe the longstanding conservative notion that institutions that have lasted the test of time are somehow necessarily better.

Returning to the TEU, Britain had also conceded to increasing the powers of the EP. Against the British preference for intergovernmental cooperation, the EP represents a supranational element of the EU framework, with members aligned on a political rather than a national basis. Moreover, in contrast to British liberal interests, the Christian Democrats (officially, the 'Group of the European People's Party') and Socialist groups have predominated over the Liberals in the EP, and both have provided the bulk of the presidents. Contributing to their success, both are the only two groups that include individual politicians from every member state.[6]

---

[3] *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 11-1981, point 1.2.2.
[4] *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 2-1984, point 1.6.1.
[5] Thatcher, M. (1993) *Speech in The House of Lords*. 7 June.
[6] See: Dinan, D. (1994) *Ever Closer Union?* (London: Macmillan). pp. 273-7.

The EP acquired an enhanced role in Community affairs and greater legislative power through extensive use of the co-decision procedure. However, Britain had successfully resisted pressure to take decisions on foreign policy by majority voting, and only limited moves towards majority voting in other areas were conceded. For example, as described below, all but Britain decided to take majority voting into the social field. In all, the balance between the supranational and intergovernmental elements had been maintained because the Council and the Parliament gained most, and the Commission gained least.

A discourse-theoretical approach to this subject will now be presented. This chapter is divided into two main sections. *Section 2* will illustrate how the diverging discourses of Britain and Continental Europe have led to diverging understandings of 'liberal democracy'. *Section 3* will examine the EC debate (1991-3) to demonstrate how this divergence in discourse equally explains the diverging understandings of the principle of 'subsidiarity', and thus, of 'European union'. The following chapter will explain why these discourses are different and opposed, and why British discourse is opposed to European political integration as a consequence.

2.0. Liberal democracy as a discursive formation

This section will begin by illustrating that 'liberal democracy' is a contingent articulation of liberalism and democracy, and thus, a 'discursive formation'. A discursive formation is a result of the articulation of a variety of discourses into a relatively unified whole. Hence, liberal democracy is a discursive formation because it consists of a variety of different discourses that have been articulated

together.[7] This observation will be examined in regard to the different and opposing articulations of liberal democracy in Britain and Continental Europe.

The work of C. B. Macpherson is instructive here because it introduced the 'radical contextualization' to the question of democracy.[8] That is, Macpherson demonstrated that the links between components of a theoretical structure or a 'worldview' are *contingent* rather than necessary or logically required. Thus, Macpherson exposed the *contingent* articulation of democracy and liberalism, the unexpressed assumptions of liberal theory that govern its discursive sequences, and finally, the other ways in which democracy could be conceived and articulated to totalizing discourses beyond those of Western liberalism.[9] As he asserts, 'democracy has become an ambiguous thing, with different meanings - even apparently opposite meanings - for different peoples'.[10] As this chapter illustrates, in the EC, 'democracy' is a 'floating signifier' overflowed with meaning because it is articulated differently within the different (hegemonic) discourses of the member states.

Similarly, liberalism has never constituted a unified and consistent doctrine. Rather, it has represented an amalgam of different doctrines, including the 'Recht Staat', the defence of individual freedom and basic rights, the recognition of pluralism, representative government, the separation of powers, the limitation of the role of the state, rationalistic individualism, and capitalist market economy.

---

[7] Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek.* (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell.) p. 300.
[8] Laclau, E (1993) 'The Signifiers of Democracy', in: J. H. Carens (ed.) *Democracy and Possessive Individualism*. (New York: State University of New York Press). p. 221.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Macpherson, C. B. (1966) *The Real World of Democracy*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press). p. 2.

In the sense of representative government, liberalism existed for a long period without being democratic in any possible sense of the term.[11] Democracy emerged later as a discourse of popular sovereignty, universal suffrage and equality. For a long while, the two terms opposed each other as democracy was identified with mob rule and carried a pejorative meaning.[12] As Macpherson observes:

> Democracy used to be a bad word. Everybody who was anybody knew that democracy, in its original sense of rule by the people or government in accordance with the will of the bulk of the people, would be a bad thing - fatal to individual freedom and to all the graces of civilized living. That was the position taken by pretty nearly all men (sic.) of intelligence to about a hundred years ago.[13]

Indeed, it was only through a long process, which embraced the whole Nineteenth Century and the beginning of the Twentieth Century, that the contingent articulation of liberalism and democracy as 'liberal democracy' was progressively established. However, this contingent articulation has not produced a harmonious unity: a tension persists between the traditional liberal principles of 'pluralism', 'individualism' and 'freedom' and the democratic principles of 'unity', 'community' and 'equality'.

Significant to our understanding of British Euroscepticism, this tension is reflected in a conflict between British and Continental European discourse. Indeed, extant British and Continental European hegemonic forces responded differently to the conflict between liberalism and democracy, and as a consequence, British hegemonic discourse reflects a *liberal* democratic, or more precisely, a liberal-individualist articulation, and Continental European hegemonic discourse reflects a liberal *democratic* articulation. As *Section 3* demonstrates, but previous

---

[11] Laclau, E. (1993) Op. Cit. p. 222.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Macpherson, C. B. (1966) Op. Cit. p. 1.

research has ignored, this conflict in discourse has been a crucial obstruction to the process of European integration.

2.1. Pluralism and unity

For Liberal democracy, there is a conflict between the liberal principle of 'pluralism' and the need for the social and political 'unity' of democratic society. The principle of pluralism cannot reign unchallenged, as a (minimum) consensus concerning the values informing a mode of societal coexistence is required.[14] Here, the problem is that a consensus based upon a comprehensive moral ideal would obstruct the principle of pluralism, as it would arbitrarily privilege a particular conception of the common good. British discourse opposes such an assertion of a common good in its understanding of a Hobbesian *modus vivendi* in terms of a consensus on a set of institutional procedures based upon self-interest.

2.2. Individualism and communitarianism

For this thesis, the crucial point is that there is a conflict between the moral and ontological 'individualism' of liberalism and the 'communitarianism' implicit in democratic theory. For example, the democratic (and Continental European) notion of 'popular sovereignty' refers to the existence of a 'collective will' that is more than the aggregate of individual wills and whose realization will often conflict with some of these individual wills.[15] It is precisely the politics of collective will formation, hinging upon the construction of antagonistic relations between 'friends' and 'enemies', that conflicts with liberal-individualism and thus, with

---

[14] Torfing, J (1999) Op. Cit. p. 250.
[15] Ibid. p. 251.

British (hegemonic) discourse. For example, Britain upholds a notion of 'parliamentary sovereignty' which refers to the liberal-individualist conception of an aggregate of atomized and competing individuals. It perceives the individual as the starting point and destination of social action, and politics is consequently defined as the selfish pursuit of private interest.[16]As liberalism is essentially a theory of atomistic individualism, it is radically incompatible with the communitarian aspect of democracy implicit within Continental European discourse and thus, its initiatives for European political integration.

For the term 'liberal-democracy', 'liberal' is a qualification upon 'democracy', in the sense that the right of the majority to have public policy based on its will is qualified by the rights of individuals and minorities, so as to avoid the 'tyranny of the majority'. By contrast, in Britain, the electoral system tends to produce a single-party government with *minority* popular support. Moreover, the existence of only a maximum term of office - at Prime Ministerial initiative - and the increased power of the Executive over the Legislature, plus the absence of a written constitution and Bill of Rights, and the maintenance of official secrecy rather than a Freedom of Information Act, all these indicate a very divergent understanding of 'liberal-democracy' in these terms. As will now be illustrated, the reasons for these divergences lie in the British system being founded upon liberal *freedoms* rather than democratic *rights*.

2.3. Freedom and equality

There is a direct conflict between the liberal and British principle of 'freedom' and the democratic and Continental European principle of 'equality'. The British liberal

concept of liberty defends the negative freedom of individuals from the tyranny of political authorities and institutions (such as that of the EU). Individuals should be free to do what they want providing they are responsible for their actions and allow other people the same degree of freedom. As examined in *Section 2.6.4.*, this notion is reflected in the British understanding of 'government' as 'responsible' for determining the national interest rather than being 'responsive' to popular or majority perceptions of it. Hence, the British principle of 'ministerial responsibility' allows ministers to be free to do what they want to do providing they take responsibility for any actions that undermine the (government-determined) national interest.

As British government is founded upon freedoms rather than rights, the extent and therefore the very definition of freedoms lies with government, whereas rights would serve to limit the initiative and discretion - and ultimately the scope of authority - *of government*. Hence, the British obstruction to the social and political dimensions of European integration. Indeed, British governments from the Whig era (1679-1867) to the present have prided themselves upon defending 'traditional liberal freedoms' rather than 'constitutional democratic rights'. But as indicated, this leaves *government* to differentiate between 'liberty' (the freedom to do good things) and 'licence' (the freedom to do ill or to act irresponsibly). Thus, in Britain the greater freedom and discretion lies with government whilst the citizen is bound by the greater obligation. In contrast, the Continental European conception of equality gives the greater freedom to citizens and robs government of much of its discretion, indeed produce unavoidable *obligations* (to uphold citizens' rights) for government.

---

[16] Mouffe, C. (1990) 'Radical Democracy or Liberal Democracy?', *Socialist Review*, May, pp. 60-1.

In sum, Continental European liberal democracy advances the liberal principle of freedom and the democratic principle of equality, as reaffirmed by Laclau and Mouffe's project of 'radical plural democracy' in *Chapter 7*. However, British liberal-individualism primarily supports the liberal principle of freedom rather than the democratic principle of 'equality'. Indeed, in direct conflict with Continental European discourse, British liberalism opposes equality where it threatens the freedom of the individual (or the individual state in international relations) to compete with other autonomous individuals, and thus, to prosper over others. Thus, whilst Continental European liberal democracy supports the principles of freedom and equality, British discourse supports the principle of freedom, but holds that this primary concern is undermined by the pursuit of equality. Hence, British Government defends individual freedom *against* democratic initiatives for equality (such as those that may be proposed by the Commission and supported by other EC/EU member states) because they are seen to undermine liberal-individualism rather than to enrich liberal democracy.

In all, as this section has demonstrated, the crucial difference between Britain and Continental Europe is that the democratic element of liberal democracy is absent within British discourse. Thus, the Continental European member states of the EC are liberal democratic, but Britain has a conflicting liberal-individualist discourse. This aberrant British discourse will now be examined because, as *Section 3* illustrates, it is crucial to explaining why Britain is seen to hold an awkward conception of European integration.

2.4. British liberal-individualism

It might be possible to mediate these persistent conflicts between pluralism and unity, individualism and communitarianism, and freedom and equality. However, none of the possible forms of mediation can reconcile the immanent conflicts of liberal democracy. There is a fundamental tension between the liberal logic of difference and the democratic logic of equivalence. For Mouffe, it is the 'undecidable' game between these logics that keeps liberal democracy alive and secures the primacy of politics.[17]

However, this fundamental tension is not evident in British discourse because the principles that are assumed above to signify 'democracy' (unity, community and equality) are largely absent. This democratic deficit raises questions about the liberal democratic status of Britain. Furthermore, although it incorporates the principles that are assumed above to signify 'liberalism', the British understanding of liberalism is also different. Indeed, it is precisely the lack of a democratic tradition as a counter-resistance or fundamental tension within British discourse that has allowed an aberrant liberalism to develop. Furthermore, as *Chapter 4* demonstrates, the aberrant nature of British liberalism is explained by its development *in opposition* to the democratic traditions of Continental Europe. Hence, French 'liberalism' is not as close to the 'possessive individualism' described by Macpherson[18] and signified by the British equivalent. Consequently, what Britain conceives as 'liberal democratic' would be viewed as a peculiar understanding of liberalism from the above liberal *democratic* perspective and from the Continental understanding of liberal *democracy* which this perspective

---

[17] Mouffe, C. (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 65-6.

describes. Conversely, from the British *liberal* perspective, the above perspective and its given liberal democratic criteria could equally be contested, and its anti-foundational basis could be questioned and condemned as ethnocentric and 'Eurocentric', as explained in *Chapter 6.*

Such observations emphasize that there has to be a shared discourse within which decisions and judgements can be made in regard to empirical and moral claims[19], and Britain does not share the same liberal democratic discourse which the above perspective shares with Continental Europe. Without this minimum condition, the different - but equally justifiable - values and principles of each discourse renders meaningless such debate across discourses. Concomitantly, the meaning of such debate between different discourses is undermined because of the consequent different values and principles signified by common terms.

2.5. The philosophical principles of British liberal-individualism

As this chapter emphasizes, it is these discursive factors which are crucial to the problem of British-European integration. First, however, it is necessary to determine the specific ideas of British 'liberal-individualism' which produce this effect, and thus, which produce the different understandings of the principles of European integration, and of the EU itself.

Here, it is important to consider that the form in which notions such as liberty and democracy are defined at the level of political philosophy has important consequences at a variety of other levels of discourse, and contribute decisively

---

[18] See: Macpherson, C. B. (1962) *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

to shaping the common sense of the masses.[20]Such 'irradiation effects' cannot be considered as the simple adoption of a philosophical point of view at the level of 'ideas'. Rather it should be seen as a more complex set of discursive hegemonic operations embracing a variety of aspects, both institutional and ideological, through which certain 'themes' are transformed into nodal points of a discursive formation (that is, of an historical bloc).

In this sense, the British understanding of liberalism is derived from the English political philosophy of the seventeenth century that was, at that time, perceived as both novel and progressive.[21] It was novel in that it advanced the idea of 'possessive individualism', where individuals were sovereign over their own persons and could enter into a variety of contractual social exchanges to secure their autonomous needs and wants. Following the English political theory of possessive individualism developed by Thomas Hobbes[22] and John Locke[23], the inviolable integrity of the individual was broadened further to include not only personal actions and opinions, but also its natural possessions in terms of body, capabilities, property and a relentless drive to appropriate material as well as immaterial resources. Thus, the individual is only free if these possessions are protected from interference by public authorities and institutions (such as the EU).[24]Such ideas represented a change in British discourse from the contemporary religious and feudal-based related ideas that placed individuals

---

[19] Howarth, D. (1995) 'Discourse Theory', in D. Marsh and G. Stoker (eds) *Theories and Methods in Political Science*. (London: Macmillan). p. 128.
[20] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. (London: Verso). p. 174.
[21] See: Macpherson, C. B. (1962) Op. Cit.
[22] Hobbes, T. (1986) [1651] *Leviathan*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin), Hobbes, T. (1839) *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes: Volumes I-II*. (London: J. Bohn); Hobbes, T. (1928) *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*. Edited by F. Tönnies. (Cambridge), and Hobbes, T. (1651) [1642] *Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society*.
[23] See: Locke, J. (1894) *Essays on the Law of Nature*. Edited by W. Von Leyden, Oxford, and Locke, J. (1960) *Two Treaties of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett, Cambridge.
[24] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 251.

within a social hierarchy of duty, obedience, and deference. Such political philosophy was progressive in that it offered a new legitimating interpretation for the rising mercantile bourgeoisie in their struggle against feudal absolutism, in both state and church.[25]That is, it was the theory of the nascent English bourgeois revolution.[26] British utilitarian ethics and theories of government action were later developed in the theory of market liberalism by Jeremy Benthan and James Mill.[27]

Hence, liberalism ensured a certain 'intelligibility' in Britain during the early development of its industrial capitalism which took place before the influence of democratic thought. As Laclau asserts:

> ... the availability of certain discourses is what ultimately decides what reading is going to prevail. Discourse is often accepted not because it is particularly liked, but because it is the only one that ensures a certain intelligibility of what would otherwise be an irrational situation.[28]

In the mid-nineteenth century, the influential presentation of liberal democracy in the work of J.S. Mill was the one major attempt to reply to the democratic critique of liberalism. Here, as Macpherson asserts, the attached democratic elements were extra-liberal and represented an attempt to improve liberalism by co-opting pre-seventeenth century notions of democracy which held an understanding of humankind and thus, affirmed the intrinsic value of human action: in sum, the discourse of civic virtue and natural capacity derived from Aristotle. In contrast, the British liberal discourse of humankind affirms that man is a bundle of appetites in search of satisfaction.

---

[25] Preston, P. W. (1994) *Europe, Democracy and the Dissolution of Britain: An Essay on the Issue of Europe in UK Public Discourse*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth). p. 36. See also: Moore, B. (1966) *The Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. (Boston: Beacon Press).
[26] See: Pollard, S. (1971) *The Idea of Progress*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin).
[27] See: Held, D. (1987) *Models of Democracy*. (Cambridge: Polity).
[28] Laclau, E. (1993) Op. Cit. p. 228.

Macpherson argues that Mill's attempt to combine these two ideas was a logically incoherent failure because they upheld two different ideas of power. Congruent to Isaiah Berlin's distinction between positive and negative liberty[29], the Aristotelian discourse upholds an ethical developmental idea (power *to do*) and the liberal discourse upholds a neutral-descriptive idea (power *over*).[30]

Thus, an aberrant British discourse prevailed with a specific set of core liberal-individualist ideas. In accordance to the logic of equivalence, these moments construct a chain of equivalence because they express a certain 'liberal-individualist' sameness. Hence, liberal-individualism represents a nodal point within British discourse, as an empty signifier that has fixed the content of these floating signifiers by articulating them within this chain. From the point of view of this research, these liberal-individualist ideas are the same ideas that have undermined British-European integration and opposed the liberal democratic chain of equivalence of Continental Europe. These inter-related and mutually conditioned liberal-individualist ideas are described in the following subsection.

2.6. The liberal-individualist moments of British discourse

2.6.1. Possessive individualism

As emphasized in this chapter, in the absence of a British (hegemonic) democratic tradition, there is a conflict between British *liberal-individu*alism and the Continental European articulations of liberalism and republican democracy as *liberal democracy*. However, there is also a conflict between British and

---

[29] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 36. See: Berlin, I. (1969) *Four Essays on Liberty*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Continental European conceptions of liberalism itself. As will now be examined, the British abstract conception of the individual as an 'uncumbered self' conflicts with the Continental European 'collectivist' conception of the 'social located' individual, as developed by the English possessive individualism of Hobbes and Locke and the French liberal theory of Rousseau respectively. The possessive individualism of Hobbes and Locke, whereby individuals are autonomous agents who both know their own minds and are themselves the seat of unlimited desires, is an important tenet of British liberalism. Such ontological claims differ to the continental philosophical perspective of such theorists as Rousseau, where individuals are viewed as essentially social.

To elucidate, British liberal-individualism affirms the maximization of liberty for each individual. Whilst it is recognized that one individual's liberty potentially impinges upon that of another, this is conceived in universalist abstract terms, rather than via concrete social location. By contrast, European notions of liberalism consider the effect of the individual - and hence the potential consequences of such individual liberty - upon the nature of the community, because it is recognized, following Rousseau, that the relationship between the individual and the community is not unproblematic. Not only does the interest of the individual as a member of the community differ from their 'selfish' individual interest, but the ability of some to follow selfish interests is more detrimental to the community than the result of that same freedom followed by others. In short, European liberalism takes far more account of the social location of the individual it posits, whilst British liberalism tends to focus upon an abstract individual. It is instructive to transpose these perceptions onto the European political arena; that is, for 'individual' read Britain; for 'community/society', read 'Europe'! Here,

---

[30] See: Macpherson, C. B. (1962) Op. Cit.

'Europe' respects and tries to incorporate the different viewpoints made by Britain in the process of European integration to achieve the maximum benefit of all and to create the best Europe for all (whilst being aware that the pursuit of selfish interests by any given 'individual' will undermine the community). By contrast, Britain pursues the greatest self-interest and benefits to itself, and in doing so, limits the benefits not only to (the rest of) Europe as a whole, but ultimately and paradoxically, limits the benefits accruing to Britain itself.

The British liberal idea of economics affirms 'non-citizenship' from its understanding of an agglomeration of private individuals competing in a free market. This premise is upheld by Hobbes who rejected the Aristotelian notion of the essence of man in favour of humankind as 'material'. The consequence was that the ethics of British discourse were limited to a notion of untutored nature and a set of rules. Such undermined the attempt by British theorists of the Enlightenment to develop ethical rules derived from claims about 'natural man'. Moral philosophy was lost because British discourse could only comprehend the development of individuals as bundles of appetites bounded by restrictions.[31] The consequence is that British discourse views individuals as morally autonomous individuals confronting other individuals, where self-responsibility and manipulative competition are conjoined in a social realm without a shared understanding of community[32] (and thus, of a European community).

---

[31] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 50. See also: MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After Virtue*. (London: Duckworth).
[32] Ibid. See also: MacIntyre, A. (1981) Op. Cit.

2.6.2. Contractual social relations

This characterization of social life as essentially contractual is derived from the possessive individualist premise of the centrality of the autonomous individual. The social sphere or the trans-individual is constituted by the myriad contracts which individuals enter into either directly or indirectly via involvement in established institutions. This eliminates the Continental notion of the social, and thus, Continental notions of the collective, community and interdependence. For Britain, collectivity connotes constraint and individualism connotes freedom.

Congruent to liberal-individualism, the sphere of politics as well as the public is contractual. There is no principle of collective political life or political behaviour outside the institutional arenas of *national* parliamentarism. Hence, political action outside national parliamentary control is equated with illegitimate interference, disorder, chaos and crisis. The liberal-individualist ideas of individual autonomy and contracted rules means that there is no principle of citizenship, with its legitimate public sphere centred upon a republican democratic state. This British position is reinforced by market liberalism (see *Section 2.6.8.*), which envisages an agglomeration of private individuals whose autonomous arising wants are secured contractually in the marketplace.

2.6.3. Parliamentary sovereignty

The principle of parliamentary sovereignty requires detailed examination since it is pivotal to British political discourse. Moreover, it is significant to the British rejection of supranational levels of political representation and decision-making.

Thus, it is crucial to our understanding of the Britain's opposition to European political supranational integration and its aberrant conception of subsidiarity, as examined in *Section 3*.

As explained in *Chapter 5*, in Britain, the principle of parliamentary sovereignty is articulated with liberal-individualism, and thus, this discursive formation can be described as 'parliamentary liberalism'. As a prescription, this British parliamentary liberalism advances a system of representative and responsible government, as described in the following subsection.[33] Within this prescription, A. V. Dicey presented parliamentary sovereignty in *The Law of the Constitution* as an 'undoubted legal fact':

> The principle of Parliamentary sovereignty means neither more nor less than this, namely, that Parliament ... has, under the English constitution the right to make or unmake any law whatever; and, further, that no person or body is recognised by the law of England as having the right to override or set aside the legislation of Parliament.[34]

Since then, the sovereignty of parliament has been accepted as one of the fundamental doctrines of constitutional law in Britain, retaining 'what seems to be an absolute and immutable character'.[35] It is this immutability as a prescription, as the 'critical morality' of the constitution - as a specification of the relationship that ought to exist between the British executive, parliament and the electorate - that blocks the process of British-European integration. Indeed, British government has fiercely opposed EU initiatives that would give its political institutions 'the right to override or set aside the legislation of Parliament'. The extent to which this right

---

[33] See: Birch, A. H. (1998) *The British System of Government*. Tenth Edition. (London, New York: Routledge). First published in 1967 (London: Allen and Unwin), and Birch, A. H. (1964) *Representative and Responsible Government*. (London: Allen and Unwin).
[34] Dicey, A. C. (1885) *The Law Of the Constitution*. As quoted in: Judge, D. (1988) 'Incomplete Sovereignty: The British House of Commons and the Completion of the Internal Markets in the European Communities', *Parliamentary Affairs*, October, Volume 41, No. 4, p. 444. (pp. 441-55).
[35] Bradley, A. W. (1985) 'The Sovereignty of Parliament - In Perpetuity?' in Jowell, J., D. Oliver (eds). *The Changing Constitution.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press). p. 24.

has already been taken by the EU is widely resented, and has instigated implacable resistance among traditionalists of both major parties to any further 'incursions' into parliamentary sovereignty. In all, in the absence of a republican democratic form and the congruent specification of citizen rights, parliamentary sovereignty is a law-unto-itself.

Thus, as a theory of legitimate power, the prescriptive force of the concept of 'parliamentary sovereignty' cannot be challenged - it provides British government with both the right and duty to control the destiny of the nation. It therefore follows that beyond its necessity for the proper defence and security of the nation, supranational commitments limiting national sovereignty must be resisted. Hence the very nature of British government represents a crucial impediment to the integration of Britain within the EU. As Marquand observes, the 'Westminster model' is a very particular form of institutionalized power and authority. The model is a legacy of the nineteenth century that is heavily influenced by the utilitarian individualism of Jeremy Benthan who thought that sovereignty was inherently unlimited, that the Crown-in-Parliament must be absolutely and inalienably sovereign.[36] Thus was political authority concentrated and protected against rival claims, from local or regional government, from supra-national bodies such as the institutions of the EU.

Indeed, it is the defence of this legacy that is manifest in the present British obstruction to EU integration. This is manifest in that the defence of this legacy is circular: the long duration of the legacy is proof itself of the legacy. Secondly, for the 'conservative' nature of British discourse, the *long duration* of the legacy strengthens its present resonance as something 'British' and sacred. Third, the

successful defence of the legacy makes it something to be proud of - British discourse constructs parliamentary sovereignty as a 'trophy' that Britain has successfully retained through 'thick and thin'.

These points are evident within the 'humble address to the Sovereign' in 1945 by Winston Churchill which is claimed to be a classic example of what Marquand calls a 'Whig imperialist' view of the past and the British state:

> ... but it is kinship to which all the other governments of the Empire feel an equal allegiance ... It is the golden circle of the Crown which alone embraces the loyalties of so many states and races all over the world ... we may certainly flatter ourselves. The wisdom of our ancestors has led to an envied and enviable situation. We have the strongest parliament in the world. We have the oldest, the most famous, the most secure, the most serviceable monarchy in the world. King and parliament both rest safely and solidly upon the will of the people expressed by free and fair election on the basis of universal suffrage. Thus the system has long worked harmoniously both in peace and war.[37]

Here, there is evidence of the traditional belief that the British democratic system is enviable because it is based upon monarchy and 'strong' parliament - it is thus, something glorious and demanding of defence. Also evident is the British idea of conservation and order as glorious within themselves in that the British monarchy is glorious because it is the oldest and most secure. There is also a circular argument that suggests that this system should be proudly defended because it has been strong enough to defend itself for the longest time. The conservative logic of these latter two points is examined further in *Chapter 5* with regard to Edmund Burke. In addition, it is inferred that this system has stood the test of time because of its democratic nature, despite the 'reality' that true universal suffrage was not granted until 1928, and indeed the notion of 'strong government' itself suggesting otherwise.

---

[36] Marquand, D. (1988) *The Unprincipled Society*. (London: Fontana). p. 9.
[37] Marquand, D (1995) 'After Whig imperialism? Can there be a British identity?' *New Community*, Volume 21, No. 2. p. 186.

Such 'Whig-imperialist' attitudes have prevailed, and thus British discourse continues to understand the EU as a foreign-dominated forum that desires to 'drag sovereignty away from the mother of parliaments' and to subject Britain to a 'mercilessly centralising' bombardment of rule by Euro-money and Euro-directive. Such an understanding is implicit in the spoken foreword by the former Speaker of the House of Commons, the late Lord Tonypandy, to the pre-election video issued by the Referendum Party in April 1997:

> My support for Sir James Goldsmith's initiative is natural for me for I am in harmony with the sturdy defence of our British parliamentary system advanced by my predecessors in the speaker's Chair of the House of Commons. For me to remain silent would be an act of treason, for such a cowardly act would betray the noble heritage handed on to me in the House of Commons. God bless you in your efforts as you battle for Britain.[38]

Here, Tonypandy implies the 'historically rooted genius and superiority of the British parliamentary system' which is threatened from without by 'the Other', the EU. 'To remain silent' against this threat to parliamentary sovereignty by 'the Other' is equated to treason and cowardice, that is, the betrayal of a set of values enclosed within the 'noble heritage ... in the House of Commons'.[39]

That this tradition has been conserved, has been 'handed on', which is the very rationale for its continued defence and superiority - it is not suggested that it should be preserved because it is democratic to the masses or even profitable to the elite, but only that it has been handed on by his predecessors. Hence, the focus of concern is merely the betrayal of a tradition rather than any attempt to assess the present value of this tradition itself in fulfilling the purpose for which it was created in the first place.

Having made these observations, a fourth can be presented regarding British discourse. Hegemony is achieved if and when one political project determines the rules and meanings in a particular social formation.[40] The long success of the existing hegemonic relations in Britain has maintained a discursive articulation of utilitarian individualism and parliamentary sovereignty and thus, a utilitarian individualist understanding of 'absolute' parliamentary sovereignty persists. This discursive articulation also explains why Britain understands 'European Union' as an aggregate of individual competing national states (see *Section 2.6.7.*).

Thus, and fifth, in contradiction to Preston's optimism for 'external structural dynamics of change' breaking the containing/demobilizing effects of an 'official British ideology', such 'dynamics' confront a much greater problem - a different British national understanding of these global dynamics that results from the British discursive articulation of utilitarian individualism and absolute sovereignty. Hence, a discourse-theoretical approach would suggest that the EU can only achieve hegemony over Britain if and when it comes to determine a new discursive articulation of the rules and meanings of the British social formation.

2.6.4. Representative and responsible government

Representative government is the mechanism of British political liberalism.[41] As indicated above, it is a mechanism informed by the discursive formation of British parliamentary liberalism. It means that British subjects (not citizens) view parliament from outside as a place that belongs definitely to those who are

---

[38] As cited in: Anderson, P. J. and T. Weymouth (1999) *Insulting the Public? The British Press and the European Union.* (London, New York: Longman). p. 19.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Howarth, D. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 124.
[41] See: Birch, A. H. (1964) Op. Cit., and Birch, A. H. (1998) Op. Cit.

deemed 'responsible' to make decisions on their behalf. This contrasts with Continental understanding of participatory government where citizens (not subjects) are routinely and extensively involved in national decision-making. In Britain, representative government is upheld by parliamentary sovereignty because parliament enshrines the electoral principle and thereby legitimates government and the political system within British rationale. Thus, since the 1867 Reform Act, a political system has evolved in Britain based upon the liberal-individualist idea of a minimum state and the negative liberal principle of freedom and responsible government, rather than upon the continental democratic idea of rights and responsive government and the notion that the state (and thus, the European state) can have a positive role in the development of formal and substantive democracy.

In sum, following the British concept of liberty, British government is 'responsible' for *determining* the national interest (that reflects the national aggregate of the negative freedoms of individuals). It is also responsible for *defending* the national interest from the tyranny of non-national political authorities and institutions (such as that of the EU). In due course, as this chapter illustrates, the failure to do so is viewed as treason - as a betrayal of the nation.

Moreover, in accordance with the British principle of absolute parliamentary sovereignty, the upper limits of the British conception of government are the national institutions of government and parliament. Thus, the British notion of government is only compatible with *national* governance and opposes supranational levels of political representation and decision-making. Thus, once again, British government is responsible for defending the national interest from

the tyranny of non-national political authorities and institutions, and the failure to do so is viewed as treason, and so on.

In direct contrast, reflecting its republican notion of citizenship and civil rights, the role of government in Continental Europe is to defend and *respond* to the national interest as determined by the majority of its citizens. Thus, this 'bottom-up' republican and participatory conception of government has no upper limit. As reflected in its conception of subsidiarity, the Continental European notion of government is compatible with national and supranational levels of governance because all these forms of political representation can defend and respond to the rights of citizens.

Therefore, the bottom-up Continental European conception of *responsive* participatory government allows for supranational government, but the British 'top-down' conception of representative and *responsible* government does not. In due course, and significant to *Section 3* of this chapter, British discourse rejects supranational decision-making, and thus, Continental European notions of European political integration.

2.6.5. The minimum state

For British government, democracy has become merely a technique for recruiting office holders rather than a substantive ethic as evident in Continental democratic theory. For Continental democratic theory, the state can have a positive role in the development of formal and substantive democracy.

Congruent with the British liberal rationale of the above moments, the state (and thus, the European supranational state) has a minimum role as a 'rule-keeper'. Here, the British idea of negative liberty as freedom from restraint is affirmed.[42] 'The social' is dangerous: it is either the sphere of the state, which is perceived as necessarily restrictive, or the realm of aggregated individuals, the mass, which is perceived as inherently unstable and disorganized. Both spheres imply 'unfreedom', *de jure* or *de facto*.[43]Hence, the intervention by the state is minimized in all spheres which are perceived to restrict freedom, but increased in the sphere of 'law and order' to secure the individual freedoms of the masses. In accordance with Hobbes, subjects are seen as in need of protection from each other as well as from their governors, and following the British liberal philosophy of Locke, the role of the state is to protect individual freedom and the property that individuals acquire as a result. Indeed, British discourse is underpinned by Locke's assertion that individual property rights are antecedent to society.[44]

As a sphere of the state, bureaucracy is also equated with the restriction of freedom. Congruent to Berlin's description of negative liberty, freedom is freedom from constraint, and hence, the bureaucratic sphere appears as a restriction to the freedom of responsible politicians and responsible subjects. In pursuit of the central liberal concern of private satisfaction, a minimum amount of bureaucracy may be required to secure 'order'. However, it is held that these associated restrictions are negative liberties that are likely to expand.[45]As Preston observes, the consequence is that bureaucracy becomes the realm of state-occasioned unfreedom.[46]Bureaucratic rules that are perceived as fussy, irrational, obscure

---

[42] See: Berlin, I. (1969) Op. Cit.
[43] Preston, P.W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 41.
[44] Marquand, D. (1988) Op. Cit. p. 154.
[45] Preston, P.W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 44.
[46] Ibid.

and foolish[47]serve to undermine privacy, private satisfaction, and freedom from constraint. Moreover, bureaucracy is perceived as inefficient. Red tape is deployed to enforce intrusive and meddlesome rules. Furthermore, bureaucracy is deemed to have its own internal agendas. It is remote, uncaring and unresponsive. It fails to provide a good standard of service. It fails also to be deferential and does not know its place as the servant - rather than master - of the public. As Preston asserts, it is revealing that the 'business of service' became an early theme for John Major as prime minister and formed the core of his 'citizens charter'.[48]

As perceived as the concentrate of the broader state, bureaucracy is symbolic of the unfreedom and danger of state intervention. It embodies the intensified manifestation of the broader state's self-seeking - and thus, uncontrollable - drive towards expansion and autonomy. Consequently, bureaucracy becomes separate from the body politic and its original purpose and thus, increasingly ineffective and corrupt. As it expands and becomes self-perpetuating, it also becomes increasingly costly. Furthermore, as its sphere of control broadens, it represents a greater threat to the liberal principle of freedom from constraint.

This rationale evolved during the Cold War where bureaucracy became equated with the unfreedom, ineffectiveness, high costs and corruption of communism and socialism. With the crisis of the post-war settlement, this rationale underpinned the neo-liberal attack upon social democracy and the welfare state. It has continued today as the rationale behind British Euroscepticism where the 'European Union' is upheld as merely the 'European Commission' in Brussels,

---

[47] See: Albrow, M. (1974) *Bureaucracy*. (London: Macmillan).
[48] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 44.

which is equated to a growing French-German conspired and socialist 'European superstate' of 'burgeoning bureaucracy'. As such, it is equated with corruption, ineffectiveness, high costs, and restrictions to traditional British freedoms.

2.6.6. Rule of law

In accordance with the liberal ideas of British discourse and in contrast to the democratic ideas of Continental Europe, the role of the British state is to protect individual freedom rather than to protect citizen rights. In contrast to the political systems of Continental Europe, civil rights are not positively defined in Britain. Rather, they represent a legislative loophole or residue:

> Freedom is not something that can be asserted in opposition to law; it is the residue of conduct permitted in the sense that no statute for common-law rule prohibits it.[49]

2.6.7. International liberal-individualism

As described, the ontological priority of the individual is affirmed by the British philosophical tradition of liberalism and possessive individualism. Formally, within British discourse, there are only individuals, and thereafter, there are those institutions which individuals freely contract. Each individual confronts the social world thus understood as a realm of potential gain and loss, with other individuals as potential allies or opponents.[50] This idea is translated to the international level: for such 'liberal-individualism writ-large', there are only individual states and

---

[49] Ewing, D. K. and C. A. Gearty (1990) *Freedom under Thatcher.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). p. 9.
[50] Preston, P.W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 29.

thereafter, there are those international institutions (such as EU, NATO, etc) to which individual states freely contract. Each individual state confronts the international arena thus understood in realist terms, as a realm of potential gain and loss, with other individual states as potential allies or opponents. (Crucially, however, as national parliament is the very rationale of British government, Britain can only contract with international institutions in so far as this does not obstruct parliamentary sovereignty.)

Hence, congruent with neo-realism, and in contrast to neo-functionalism, British liberal-individualism holds that it is in the interest of British state to freely contract in the *global* sphere rather than confine itself to *regional* binding contracts. As George et al observe, Britain has been a semi-detached or awkward partner of the EC/EU because it has refused to confine itself to a European sphere of economic, political, and defence interests.

2.6.8. British economic liberalism and the free market

Market liberalism is the pivotal prescription of British economic theory. It envisages an agglomeration of individuals competing in a free market for individual interests. This is a key element of the philosophical tradition of Locke and Bentham, which holds that autonomous action in the open market place will maximize human welfare. Such action was ‘progressive’ when turned against proponents of restriction from feudal and church absolutism, but ‘regressive’ when cast in the late nineteenth century as neo-classicism and deployed against the ideas of democracy. Hence, how meaning is 'temporal' must be considered. This regressive element was reinforced by the British New Right and anti-democratic

offensive in response to the collapse of the post-war social-democratic settlement (see *Chapter 7*) and in opposition to the democratic initiatives of Continental Europe and the EU.

British liberal economic theory, which prescribed free trade, sound finance and 'laissez faire', was obscured in the legitimation accorded to it in state policies. Thus free trade *transcended* economic theory and became hegemonic state policy. As Andrew Gamble argues:

> So firmly embedded ... did liberal political economy become that it has rarely appeared a crusading doctrine in England, but generally as an orthodoxy emanating from the very bowels of the state.[51]

For free trade, the conceptual hegemony has consistently found reflection in state policy. Indeed, since the mid-nineteenth century, the theory of liberal political economy has prescribed policy and accurately described those mercantile policies interpellated as the British 'national interest'. Indeed, free trade has remained the commercial policy of successive governments, and its ascendancy - though not unchallenged - has never been seriously threatened by opposing ideologies or economic strategies (Sir Joseph Austen Chamberlain's 'social imperialism' at the turn of the century, the 'democratic socialism' of the post war period, or the present process of European integration).

As will now be examined, representing the British discursive formation of parliamentary liberalism, these articulated moments have obstructed European integration. It will be demonstrated how this British discursive formation has produced aberrant understandings of the key principles of European integration, and different understandings of what is signified by that union itself.

---

[51] Gamble, A. (1985) *Britain in Decline*. (London: Macmillan). p. 129.

3.0. Britian and the EC debate on subsidiarity (1991-3)

Without attention to the different and often opposed discourses of Britain and Continental Europe, any ensuing analysis of British-European integration is misguided. This chapter seeks to affirm this assertion by providing a discourse-theoretical analysis of the EC debate upon the principle of 'subsidiarity' (1991-2). By exposing the different and opposing meanings of subsidiarity within Britain and Continental Europe, it will be argued that the ratification of the (1992) Treaty upon European Union (TEU - that is, 'the Maastricht Treaty') represented a facade of agreement and progress towards an integrated Europe, masking unchanged underlying conflicts and differences.

3.1. Different meanings of subsidiarity

The Maastricht debate upon subsidiarity in December 1991 was the culmination of a process that had begun when the EP first developed the principle in the context of European integration. As examined below *in Section 3.4.3.*, this process was later accelerated by the TEU ratification crisis, which forced the EC to come to terms with it and to develop the meaning of 'Eurofederalism'. However, this initiative failed. Subsidiarity remained an ambiguous and vague concept because it continued to be interpreted differently by different member states, and between the European Commission and 'awkward' member states such as Britain.

Jacques Delors had begun to explore the potential of the concept of subsidiarity from the time that he became president of the EC Commission in 1985.[52]As he told *Le Figaro* in June 1992, subsidiarity was the essence of federalism because 'the federal approach is to define clearly who does what'.[53] Thus, subsidiarity would provide clear guidelines as to where Brussels could or could not act within a European federal system, just as similar constitutional provisions determined the proper functioning of U.S. and German federalism. However, this chapter emphasises that the opposite occurred in the EC. In contrast to the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or Germany's Basic Law federalism and subsidiarity proved difficult to define for the EC because they had different and conflicting meanings within the different discourses of Britain and Continental Europe. In all, the development of a EU federal constitution is more problematic than these other examples because it has to overcome significant differences in national discourse, as well as the problem of nationalism itself, as examined in *Chapter 5*.

The concept of 'subsidiarity' featured extensively in the Maastricht debate and was accepted by all sides. However, otherwise implacable enemies could unite behind the banner of subsidiarity because the TEU stated two different and ambiguous definitions that concealed opposing understandings and preferences. For Britain, subsidiarity was a vital safeguard of national sovereignty and a way to prevent the EC from involving itself in national affairs. For Brussels and other member states, it was a crucial tenet of Eurofederalism. As observed by the French politician, Jean-Pierre Cot, this explains why only subsidiarity could 'put

---

[52] See: Delors, J. (1992) *Le Nouveau Concert Européen*. (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob), and his speech to the EP in January 1985, *Bulletin of the European Communities*. S/1-1985.
[53] *Le Figaro* (1992) 8 June. p. 1.

Delors perfectly in tune with Mrs Thatcher ... on a misunderstanding.'[54]

Similarly, in direct contrast to Delors' notion of subsidiarity as the essence of federalism, Major accepted subsidiarity because he conceived it as the essence of *anti*-federalism, that is, as a concept that signified a limited and intergovernmental approach:

> There is a tendency for the Community to want to legislate over a very wide area. That tendency needs to be curbed, and that is the essence of what has become known as subsidiarity.
>
> What subsidiarity must mean is that if a problem can be dealt with at a national level, *it should be*.[55]

Initially, subsidiarity had found its first legal expression in an EC treaty in the 1986 Single European Act (SEA) article on environmental protection. This remains the clearest application of subsidiarity in EC practice as all member states recognised the need to remedy this gap in the powers of the EC. However, even here different interpretations of subsidiarity were present. Inevitably, political judgement will always be involved whenever decisions are made about whether the EU or its member states acting on their own can better achieve a certain goal. However, different discourses produce these different judgements. Hence, the diverging discourses of Britain and Continental Europe have led to different perceptions of the integration process and conflicting views about which level of government should intervene in any given set of circumstances, or whether government should intervene at all.

It is possible to identify three different understandings of subsidiarity because of three different discursive positions within the Maastricht debate upon the TEU.

---

[54] *Le Monde.* (1990) 22 June.

[55] Major, J. (1991a) *John Major on the Forthcoming Maastricht Conference*. Extracts from the speech by Prime Minister John Major on the European Community, House of Commons, 20 November. In: Harryvan, A. G. and J. Van der Harst (eds) (1997) *Documents on European Union*. (London: Macmillan). p. 264.

These different discourses were Christian democracy, German federalism, and British parliamentary liberalism.[56]

3.1.1. Christian Democracy

As indicated above, there is a particularly large Christian Democratic consensus is in the EP, and thus, its particular understanding of subsidiarity is relatively common. As reflected in its official title in the EP, the 'European People's Party', its interpretation of subsidiarity reflects the Christian Democratic tradition of Personalism for which federalism is the corresponding politics. It embraces the principles of Catholic social philosophy: small groups should be autonomous and sovereign in pluralist society, yet united in a common morality that emphasizes duty and harmony. Hence, it reflects the liberal democratic tension between liberal 'pluralism' and democratic 'unity'. Small groups should be assisted in their activities by a state which neither substitutes for social groups nor is restrained by their demands, but which provides legal order and serves the democratic principle of the public common good. Christian democracy confers a *dynamic* as opposed to a *centralist* view of politics as it envisages state intervention only for limited periods to address specific social needs.

3.1.2. German federalism

As exemplified by the position of Delors, German federalism affirms that a federal understanding of subsidiarity would secure the principle of universality in EU law implementation. Universality will bind any EU law on all member states unless

---

[56] See also: van Kersbergen, K. and B. Verbeek (1994) 'The Politics of Subsidiarity in the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, June, Volume 32, No. 2, pp. 215-236. pp. 221-226.

special provisions to the contrary are agreed. As Delors hoped to establish, it supports a 'total concept' or clear plan for the political evolution of the EU, which specifically defines the duties and powers of different levels of government in Europe. As described above, subsidiarity was the essence of federalism because 'the federal approach is to define clearly who does what'.[57] In particular, the German lander wanted to see their substantial powers, which are guaranteed by the German constitution, protected against trespass by EU institutions as integration proceeds.

In contrast to the Christian democratic *dynamic* conception, the German federal version of subsidiarity as a means of *protection* is more *static* because it seeks to constitutionalize a division of powers between different levels of government in a federal constitution for Europe. However, expressing the same liberal democratic tension evident within the Christian democratic understanding, German federalism upholds the principle of liberal 'pluralism' as well as democratic 'unity': congruent to the constitutional principles guaranteed by German federalism which uphold the national common good, it is held that Europe requires congruent constitutional principles for a European common good guaranteed by a European federal system. Hence, these two Continental liberal democratic discourses of Christian democracy and German federalism affirm a political function for the European state which reflects their common understanding of liberal 'pluralism' as decentralization, and their common understanding of democratic 'unity' and a European public common good.

---

[57] *Le Figaro* (1992) 8 June. p. 1.

3.1.3. British parliamentary liberalism

As outlined below, the British conception of subsidiarity achieved full expression when the Major Government held the EC presidency in July 1992 and embraced subsidiarity as an *anti*-federalist and intergovernmental principle that would serve to *limit* EC powers. This narrow definition would be employed to sanction EC action when it was necessary to ensure the 'four liberal freedoms' of the single market: the free movement of goods, people, services and finance across borders.

As a consequence, the British understanding of subsidiarity confronts the logic of the Continental European liberal democratic perceptions which can - and increasingly have been used - to justify *decentralising* political power to supranational or sub-national units of government. Certainly, the hegemony of parliamentary liberalism in Britain has informed a constitutional settlement that has produced the most centralised state in the EU. Moreover, as reflected in their oppositions to European integration, British governments have been reticent about tampering with a system of government that has given them a disproportionate share of political power. In accordance with the principles of parliamentary liberalism, these hegemonic projects have resisted any internal or external constraints on the autonomy of central government and parliament. In due course, the British aberrant conception of subsidiarity holds that EU action can only be supported when it does not obstruct the sovereignty of national government and parliament, and it will only be supported if it defends or develops the European internal economic market - that is, when *supranational* action

serves rather than obstructs British *national* liberal-individualist interests (as determined by national government and parliament).

Hence, and as will be illustrated below, British discourse reflects an aberrant parliamentary liberalist understanding of subsidiarity that confronts the Continental European liberal democratic basis of both Christian democracy and German federalism. In accordance with the tenets of parliamentary liberalism, political power is centralized within the national institutions of British government. The absolute sovereignty of parliament blocks any liberal democratic understanding of political supranational decision-making. In sum, the Continental European interpretation of subsidiarity threatens the fundamental principle of British government that national parliamentary sovereignty is legitimised by the popular consent of the nation. As explained in *Sections 2.6.3-4.*, British parliamentary liberalism also blocks the Continental European liberal democratic understanding of a common good *per se* – that is, at *any* level of decision-making, whether subnational, national or supranational.

In particular, British government has feared that European integration would erode national and parliamentary sovereignty because it would impose a European federal system in which political power would become centralized at a supranational level. More precisely, within British parliamentary liberalism, Eurofederalism is a negative concept that is equivalent to the centralization of power at a supranational level in the European Commission in Brussels. For example, Margaret Thatcher, the leading Conservative backbench Eurosceptic after her ouster as party leader, warned that 'coming together in Europe [must not

mean] more centralization. That would be a most undesirable constraint on liberty'.[58]

In contrast, for the Christian democracy and German federalism of Continental Europe, subsidiarity is a positive concept that is equivalent to the *decentralization* of power throughout the EU. As will be demonstrated below, this direct conflict in the meaning and value of federalism has meant that Britain has used 'subsidiarity' to obstruct its negative interpretation of federalism in the defence of national and parliamentary sovereignty and its liberal-individualist preference for intergovernmentalism, while Brussels and other member states have used it to develop the positive supranational goals signified by their interpretation of federalism. In sum, Brussels and other European member states view subsidiarity as a tool for *developing* political integration, whilst Britain views it as a tool for *limiting* European political integration. This latter point will now be further explored and elucidated.

3.2. Subsidiarity and British parliamentary liberalism

Section 2 of this chapter demonstrated how the diverging discourses of Britain and Continental Europe have led to diverging conceptions of 'liberal democracy'. It will now be demonstrated how this divergence in discourse equally explains the diverging understandings of 'subsidiarity' evident within the Maastricht debate.

As described in *Sections 2.6.3-4*, the 'bottom up' Continental European conception of participatory *responsive* government allows for supranational government, but the British 'top-down' conceptions of 'absolute parliamentary

sovereignty' and representative *responsible* government do not. Hence, this conflict in conception of government - and thus, of how Europe should be governed - is reflected in conflicting interpretations of subsidiarity. Therefore, subsidiarity is a 'slogan which has practical force only when understood within the framework of a particular conception of the common good'.[59] That is, different meanings of subsidiarity reflect different articulations of the common good. However, as discussed in *Section 2.1.*, within liberal democracy, different conceptions of the common good reflect different articulations between the liberal principle of 'pluralism' and the need for the social and political 'unity' of democratic society. For the liberal democratic discourses of Continental Europe, pluralism cannot reign unchallenged, because a (minimum) consensus concerning the values informing a mode of societal coexistence is required.[60] Here, the dilemma is that a consensus based upon a comprehensive moral ideal would obstruct the liberal principle of pluralism because it would arbitrarily privilege a particular controversial conception of the common good, and thus, of subsidiarity. British discourse opposes such an assertion of a common good and thus, of subsidiarity, in favour of its understanding of a Hobbesian 'modus vivendi' seeing a consensus on a set of institutional procedures based upon self-interest. Hence, the British conception of 'subsidiarity' differs from the liberal democratic notion upheld by the discourses of Continental Europe.

Section 2 also illustrated that, within Continental European discourse, the 'collective will' is more than the aggregate of individual wills and its realization will often conflict with some of these individual wills.[61] For example, in Germany, it is

---

[58] Margaret Thatcher (1990) 'My Vision', *The Financial Times*, 19 November, p. 10.
[59] Adonis, A. and S. Jones (1991) *Subsidiarity and the Community's Constitutional Future*. (Oxford: Nuffield College). p. 10.
[60] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 250.
[61] Ibid. p. 251.

held that such a notion of the 'common good' is best served by a federal system, and thus, a federal understanding of 'subsidiarity' was affirmed. As illustrated above, German federalism affirms that such a conception of subsidiarity would secure the principle of universality in EU law implementation. Universality binds any EU law on all member states unless special provisions to the contrary are agreed. Hence, there is concern that the ratified principle that 'EU action is the exception and national action the rule' may be exploited for non-compliance or patchy implementation of EU directives because EU action to ensure universal compliance may be resisted on grounds of subsidiarity.

Such ideas of federalism and universality are absent within British discourse because the liberal-individualist affirmation of the ontological priority and sovereignty of the individual obstructs a democratic notion of a collective will. Accordingly, at an international level, British discourse affirms the ontological priority and sovereignty of the individual state, and this is reflected in its conflicting understanding of 'subsidiarity' for which 'EU action is the exception and national action the rule'.

Within British discourse, as the sovereign state is the starting point and destination of international action, international politics is consequently defined as the selfish pursuit of the national interest. For example, Thatcher argued that 'willing and active cooperation between independent sovereign states is the best way to build a successful European Community'.[62] Similarly, Major declared that:

> For many of our Community partners ... the diminution of the power of national governments and national parliaments is not an issue. They accept the idea of a European Federation.

---

[62] Thatcher, M. (1988) *The European Family of Nations*. Speech given at the College of Europe, on the State and Future of the European Communities', Bruges, 20 September. In: Harryvan, A. G. and J. Van der Harst (eds) (1997) Op. Cit. p. 243.

> We have never done so. ... we have shown ourselves ready to discuss individual changes in the *role* of the Community where these are in the national interest. But we are not prepared to accept wholesale changes in the nature of the Community which would lead it towards an unacceptable dominance over national life. ... We must constrain the extension of community competence to those areas where Community action or than action on a voluntary, intergovernmentalist basis.[63]

Hence, the Continental European understanding of the necessary universality of EU law implementation is absent. British liberal-individualism also upholds the idea of negative liberty as freedom from constraint, and this affirms the minimal role of the state and bureaucracy. Accordingly, British discourse emphasizes the negative freedom of the sovereign state from the tyranny of international European political authorities, bureaucracies and institutions. Therefore, individual sovereign states should be free to do what they want providing they are responsible for their actions and allow other national states the same degree of freedom.

Here, as explained in *Section 2.6.7*, the British conception of international relations as essentially contractual is derived from the possessive individualist premise of the centrality of the autonomous individual: there are only individuals, and thereafter, there are those institutions to which individuals freely contract. Each individual confronts the social world thus understood as a realm of potential gain and loss, with other individuals as potential allies or opponents. Accordingly, the centrality of the autonomous individual nation state is affirmed: there are only individual states, and those international institutions to which these individual states freely contract. Consequently, each individual state confronts the international arena thus understood as a realm of potential gain and loss, with other individual states as potential allies or opponents.

---

[63] Major, J. (1991a) Op. Cit. pp. 263-4.

For British liberal-individualism, the international sphere is constituted by the myriad contracts which individual states enter into either directly or indirectly via involvement in international institutions. Hence, this eliminates the Continental conception of the social, and concomitant notions of a European collective or European community, as well as federal notions of 'subsidiarity'. For British parliamentary liberalism, 'European collectivity' connotes constraint and 'national sovereignty' connotes freedom. Furthermore, as such ideas affirm absolute national parliamentary sovereignty, the consequence is that European contracts, and thus 'subsidiarity', are opposed because they would obstruct national political decision-making. Moreover, over the whole, of which Britain is merely part, for sovereignty to pass to a European supranational federal government would be to betray the traditional and treasured role of British government as custodian of the destiny of the British nation and state. This is then the ultimate concern to Britain held out by the prospect of European Union. As the British MEP, Lord O'Hagan explains with regard to the phrase 'federalism':

> On the Continent, it a harmless label, neither exciting nor controversial. In Britain, it carries connotations of unspeakable disloyalty and unmentionable perversity.[64]

Liberal-individualism also affirms that Britain understands 'European Union' as merely a means for expanding European economic trade. Concomitantly, this is reinforced by the notions of British market liberalism that envisage an agglomeration of individuals competing in a free market for individual interests. Accordingly, the European Union is understood as an agglomeration of individual states competing in a free market for individual national interests. Hence, the concept of subsidiarity is interpreted as a means to block any political initiatives that interfere with inter-state economic competition in the internal free market.

---

[64] Lord O'Hagan (1991) 'Federalism', in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 7 July, p. 12.

Consequently, subsidiarity is conceived as a tool to uphold liberal notions of pluralism, individualism and freedom against restricting political actions proposed by the European Commission.

By direct contrast, and congruent with the liberal democratic understanding of unity, communitarianism and equality, the Commission and Continental European member states are concerned that subsidiarity could be used to protect 'unequal' competition. For example, French politicians frequently quoted the principle in 1992 as part of the protest relating to the poor treatment of French firms by the competition authorities of the Commission. The inherent liberal democratic understanding of equality, evident within this interest in a 'level playing field' and universal compliance with EU law, is in direct contrast to the British liberal-individualist understanding of freedom and the consequent understanding of free market economics which affirms an agglomeration of private individuals competing in a free market. Here, in accordance to the idea of 'possessive individualism', individual states are sovereign over their own interests and can enter into a variety of contractual social exchanges to secure autonomous needs and wants. Furthermore, congruent with the principles of English theorists such as Hobbes and Locke[65], the inviolable integrity of the individual sovereign state includes its possessions in terms of capabilities, property and relentless drive to appropriate material. Thus, the individual sovereign state is only free if these possessions are protected from interference by the supranational authorities and institutions of the EU. Hence, since international relations are conceived as freely contractual, the international arena is understood as a realm of potential gain and loss.

For Continental Europe, in accordance with the liberal democratic principle of rights and responsive government, the state (at either a national or supranational level) can have a positive role in the development of formal and substantive democracy. Thus, a broader definition of subsidiarity would be effective in developing a more democratic and efficient multi-tiered system for European governance. This would help balance democracy with efficiency by illuminating the costs and benefits of alternative choices. As the EU should acknowledge, efficiency gains must be weighed against the possible costs to democracy of making decisions at a level that is far removed from most citizens. Indeed, one effect of the debate over subsidiarity has been to highlight this imbalance between efficiency and democratic guarantees in EU politics. Hence, the liberal democratic criticism of the EU as a highly undemocratic system of governance where the Commission remains unelected, the EP weak and the Council of Ministers a closed, secretive cabal.

However, the criticism of the EU emanating from *Britain* signifies a diverging liberal-individualist focus that affirms the negative idea of freedom as freedom from constraint. A political or democratic role for the EU is rejected in the pursuit and defence of liberal-individualist freedoms. No supranational democratic or political function is necessary or desirable in the defence of liberal freedoms, where national parliament is sovereign and the role of the EU is limited to protecting the freedom of the single market.

Thus, in British discourse, the EU is criticized for the restriction of freedom rather than the restriction of democracy. That is, the EU is equated with the infringement of freedom that state intervention and bureaucracy represents for British liberal-

---

[65] See: Macpherson, C. B. (1962) Op. Cit.

individualism. As indicated in *Section 2.6.5.*, and examined further in *Chapter 5*, British discourse often equates the 'European Union' with only the 'European Commission' in Brussels, which is equated to a growing French-German conspired and socialist 'European superstate' of 'burgeoning bureaucracy'. As such, the EU embodies the self-seeking drive towards expansion and autonomy equivalent to state intervention and bureaucracy, and hence, increasingly ineffectiveness. Moreover, as the EU expands and becomes self-perpetuating, Britain is concerned that it will also become increasingly costly. As its sphere of control broadens, it represents a greater threat to the liberal-individualist principle of freedom from constraint. Therefore, Britain obstructs initiatives for the political expansion of the EU. Following the philosophical tradition of Locke and Bentham, British government holds that autonomous action in the open market will maximize human welfare. Consequently, European state intervention is unnecessary and undesired in this regard, this rationale is reflected in the British obstruction to the social dimension of European integration. Thus, this thesis holds that it is important to demonstrate that Britain has opposed the social initiatives of the EC/EU in its defence of the free market economy and parliamentary sovereignty. Although this thesis focuses upon the *political* aspects of Britain's opposition to European integration, it is acknowledged that the development of a *social* dimension is an important step towards a progressive and supranational European identity.

3.3. The British obstruction to the European social dimension

As for the political initiatives of European integration, the conflict in discourse between Britain and Continental Europe was reflected in Britain's awkward

position upon the social integration of Europe. Britain has been the only member state to consistently oppose the Commission's proposals for a social dimension. It opposed the Social Charter (1989); the 'Action Programme (1989)'; additional directives upon maximum hours and maternity rights (and to the Commission's classification of them as measures involving health and safety at work, and thus, subject to QMV under the SEA), and the Social Chapter of the TEU (1992).

To elucidate, opposition from Britain meant that social policy was excluded from the extension of QMV in the SEA. Britain also abstained from the Social Charter, even though it was non-binding and included no provisions to transform it into a set of binding regulations. Thus, the French presidency had to negotiate a deal with Britain under which the other eleven countries adopted the Social Charter. Britain also opposed the (1989) Action Programme that contained more specific guidelines and draft proposals for social legislation. Combined with the Social Charter, areas that were addressed included rights in employment, living and working conditions, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

At the Maastricht Summit, the question of QMV on social matters became the most difficult issue because of fierce opposition from Britain. All but Britain displayed a desire to take QMV into the social field. Britain also rejected the Social Chapter of the draft of the TEU, which concerned basic salary matters, but also employee rights across the spectrum. Agreement only proved possible by dropping the Social Chapter from the draft treaty, and replacing it with a Social Protocol in which eleven member states committed themselves to making progress on social issues while Britain committed itself to nothing beyond its

liberal economic understanding of the obligations signified by the Treaty of Rome and the SEA.

This Social Protocol was phrased in such a way that Britain was permanently outside the structure - there was no possibility, in the absence of treaty amendment, of 'opting in' to the agreement. It was emphasized that, as according to the European Communities Act (1972), the Social Protocol cannot be recognised, and thus can have no force, in British law.[66] Hence, Britain preserved British national and parliamentary sovereignty and its 'right to make or unmake any law whatever'.

As examined further in *Chapter 5*, British Government had consistently rejected the social dimension on the grounds that it was considered to be a 'socialist' initiative. Such 'socialist' ideas were perceived as outdated and costly. They represented a socialist infringement upon liberal economic freedom and competition, and thus, an economic cost upon prosperity and employment. For example, in the run-up to the Madrid Summit in June 1989, Thatcher explained to the House of Commons her imminent opposition to the Social Charter, and the necessity for unanimity upon it. She argued that it would impose:

> ... unnecessary controls and regulations which would tie up industry, which would put many more costs on industry, which would make industry uncompetitive and which would therefore increase unemployment and mean that we could not compete with the rest of the world for the trade that we so sorely need.[67]

Similarly, on the Social Chapter of the TEU, John Major declared:

> We reject, and will continue to reject, the Social Chapter. ... Let Jacques Delors accuse us of creating a paradise for foreign investors. I

---

[66] European Communities Act 1972, 1(2)(k).
[67] *Hansard* (1989) Col. 470, 18 May.

> am happy to plead guilty. Again and again we warned our European partners about the Social Chapter ... They can have the Social Chapter. We'll have the jobs.[68]

In the Conservative Party political broadcast of 18 April 1996, John Major also described the Social Chapter as a 'European tax on jobs' that would stop Britain becoming the 'enterprise centre of Europe' able to compete with the states of the Pacific Basin.[69]

Britain rejected such social initiatives because they represented the infringement of freedom that state intervention and bureaucracy posed for British liberal-individualism. They reflected the social democratic preference for state intervention and burgeoning bureaucracy that the British (hegemonic) project of neo-liberalism had identified as the cause of effectiveness and crisis in Britain in the late 1970s. Thus, Britain fiercely opposed social initiatives that reflected the development of what it perceived as a European social democratic superstate. Moreover, it was held that such social democratic initiates would impose high economic costs that were unnecessary because autonomous action in the European open market would itself maximize social welfare.

In sum, British neo-liberalism continued to support EC economic initiatives that assisted the completion of the single European economic market, but opposed the social and political initiatives that would obstruct its free-market forces and/or threaten national and parliamentary sovereignty. The fierce British parliamentary opposition to the European social dimension is illustrated by the observation that, in 22 July 1993, the Social Protocol of the TEU produced the most serious parliamentary defeat suffered by a Conservative government in the twentieth

---

[68] Major, J. (1993) *Speech at Conservative Party Meeting*. 27 February.
[69] Party Political Broadcast by the Conservative Party (1996), 18 April.

century.[70] However, all other member states supported the social dimension in a shared social democratic belief that 'social consensus ... is an essential condition for sustained economic development', and that 'in the context of the establishment of the single European market, the same importance must be attached to the social aspects as to economic aspects'.[71] Indeed, from this perspective, the British neo-liberal preference for a low welfare economy would encourage crime and break down the social fabric of the 'collective' community, and thus, would have heavy costs in the long term.

Thus, Britain has supported economic initiatives that assisted the completion of the single European economic market, but opposed social and political initiatives that obstructed its free-market forces. As argued, the British obstruction to these initiatives reflects a divergence in discourse between Britain and Continental Europe. As will now be examined, this conflict in discourse was manifest within the Maastricht debate upon the TEU.

3.4. A case study: the floating signifiers of the TEU (1992)

It should be noted that subsidiarity achieved its prominence in the EC debate as a result of a convergence of three currents in 1991-92: the British refusal to accept a reference to the 'federal vocation' of the EC in the TEU; the rejection of the treaty in the first referendum in Denmark; and the success of British Conservative 'rebels' in thwarting the plans of the Major government for the smooth and speedy ratification of the TEU.

---

[70] Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994) 'The Parliamentary Siege of Maastricht 1993: Conservative Divisions and British Ratification', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 47, No. 1, p. 57; Ludlam, S. (1998) 'The Cauldron: Conservative Parliamentarians and European Integration', in: Baker, D. and D. Seawright (eds) *Britain for and Against Europe: British Politics and the Question of European Integration*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press). p. 31.

We will begin with the British opposition to the word 'federalism'. Britain rejected this principle because it signified 'centralization' because it signified centralization. Thus, John Major was adamant that the reference to federalism in the preamble of the 1985 Luxembourg draft of the TEU had to be removed, and insisted again on its withdrawal from the 1991 Dutch draft. (To Major's annoyance, the new Dutch presidency had merely changed the phrase 'federal goal' to 'federal vocation'.) Demonstrating his interpretation of federalism as a *centralizing* principle, Major argued:

> The notion of a Federal Europe leads over time to a European Parliament with full legislative powers, to which national governments and parliaments would be subordinate. ... We will not therefore accept a Treaty which describes the Community as having a federal vocation.[72]

However, following Christian Democratic and German federal discourses, Delors and other member states interpreted federalism as a *decentralizing* principle. Conceiving it as decentralizing move, other states supported the use of word 'federal', and would have settled for a phrase that appeared in previous drafts describing the treaty as marking 'a new stage in the process leading gradually to Union with a federal goal'.[73] For example, as a highly decentralized state with regional rather than national allegiances, Italy was a wholehearted champion of supranationalism, and similar to Belgium, Germany and Spain, welcomed the emergence of a federal Europe. Indeed, there were few proposals on political union to which Italy objected.[74] However, with the British government remaining completely unwilling to see the 'f-word' appear in any form at all, in the political trading which occurred before the Maastricht summit, this point was finally

---

[71] Social Charter. Preamble, recitals 5 and 2. 1989.
[72] Major, J. (1991b) The House of Commons, 20 November.
[73] As cited in: Nugent, N. (1999) [1989] *The Government and Politics of the European Union*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan). p. 65. First published in 1989 as *The Government and Politics of the European Community*. See also: Cram, L., D. Dinan and N. Nugent (eds) (1999) *Developments in the European Union*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan).
[74] Dinan, D. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 139.

conceded. Hence, the reference in the opening article of the Treaty, *Article A*, to the 'federal vocation' was replaced by a commitment to create:

> ... an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.[75]

The British delegation perceived this outcome as a victory. Its vague commitment would not be difficult to keep, even for the British. Yet, to Delors and the other member states, the phrase 'ever closer union' seemed more centralist than the word 'federal'! Indeed, as federalism signified decentralization in other European discourses, then Britain was actually supporting European centralization in its opposition to federalism.

In fact, a separate reference to subsidiarity was also formally incorporated by *Article 3b* of the TEU:

> The Community shall act within the limits of the powers conferred upon it by this Treaty and of the objectives assigned to it therein. In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Community. Any action by the Community shall not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objects of this Treaty.[76]

In accordance with Delors' interpretation, the Commission vice president, Leon Brittan, argued that this formalization of the principle of subsidiarity must be treated as a guiding political principle as well as a clearly defined legal restraint:

> (Article 3b) places a legally-binding limitation on the scope of action of the Community; it applies without caveat, limitation or exception. ... Once the Treaty has come into effect, every single new legislative act of the Community can be held up and judged under this standard.[77]

---

[75] The Treaty upon European Union. Article A. 1992.
[76] Ibid. Article 3b.
[77] Brittan, L. (1992) Speech delivered to the European University Institute, 11 June, IP/92 1477, 92/06/11.

However, similar to *Article A*, this formalization did not provide a clear guiding principle or legal restraint because it was imprecise and open to many interpretations. For example, without a specific universal agreement, how is it decided what constitutes 'sufficient' achievement or 'necessary' Community action? Thus, as for *Article A*, it only required a vague commitment from the EC and its member states. Again, as for *Article A*, it was likely that such judgements would vary between member states as well as between national and European decision-makers. Furthermore, as will now be demonstrated, the consequent ambiguity of the meaning of subsidiarity is particularly evident when the two treaty references are compared. For example, in *Article A*, subsidiarity appears to claim that decisions in a European Union should be taken, 'as closely as possible' to the citizens, which might well be taken to imply at the level of local government whenever possible. However, *Article 3b* presents subsidiarity as a procedural device for dividing competencies between the EC and (the national governments of) its member states according to which can perform specific actions most efficiently.[78] Thus, these two definitions do not have the same meaning, and nor do they amount to a clear, legal definition of subsidiarity. What they do offer, however, are definitions to suit ratification, and this suggests that there was a stronger commitment to ratifying the TEU than there was of ensuring 'an ever closer union'.

It could be thus suggested that the two articles were designed to appeal to two different discourses. They would help ratification by providing a definition of subsidiarity to suit each position. For example, the former *Article A* reference to subsidiarity based on 'closeness to the citizen' would be welcomed by Belgium,

---

[78] Scott, A., J. Peterson, and D. Millar (1994) 'Subsidiarity: a "Europe of the Regions" v. the British Constitution?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, March, Volume 32, No. 1, pp. 49-50.

Germany, Italy, and Spain, because it could be interpreted as protecting the subnational interests of the Belgian and Italian regions, the German lander, and the Spanish 'autonomous communities'. Here, in accordance to the principle of absolute parliamentary sovereignty, British negotiators had condemned arguments that the treaty should contain a legal definition of subsidiarity and give sub-national powers to the European Court of Justice to decide whether or not EC acts respected it. Such demands came from many political leaders at the state level in Germany as well negotiators from Belgium who insisted that the treaty should reflect a 'total concept' of EC governance, including 'precise details of respective powers in sensitive areas in which national traditions frequently differ'.[79] This was also the preference of the Commission, as exemplified above in the words of Delors and Brittan. However, these proposals were rejected, and thus, *Article A* emerged as a diluted compromise which sought to satisfy states such as Germany, Belgium and Britain.

In contrast, 'subsidiarity' in *Article 3b* reflected the British principles of parliamentary sovereignty and the autonomy of national states in EC decision-making. The Major government presented this definition of subsidiarity to parliament as a British victory. However, the vague language of this article could also satisfy opposing conceptions: the terms 'sufficiently' in relation to national acts, and 'better' to sanction intervention by the EC, could also signify the imposition of new supranational powers over foreign policy, defence and immigration - in direct conflict with the British conception. In sum, the term 'subsidiarity' appealed to the federal and supranational interests of Delors and

---

[79] Belgium memorandum, 19 March 1990, reprinted in: Laursen, F. and S. Vanhoonacker (eds) (1992) 'The Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union: Institutional Reforms, New Policies and the International Identity of the European Community', *European Institute of Public Administration*, pp. 269-72.

member states such as Belgium, Italy, Germany, Spain, as well as to the conflicting anti-federalist and intergovernmental interests of Britain and Denmark.

Rather than representing an anomaly, however, such ambiguity is typical of the TEA: a vague document that lacks a common conception of the EU or any common vision for its future. Such vagueness reflects the lack of agreement and progress towards the political integration of Europe that is signified by the treaty. Indeed, the crucial point is that the TEU did not represent any significant agreement or progress because what was signified by the treaty was different and even opposed for the different and opposing discourses of Britain and Continental Europe. The significance of the TEU was undermined because common terms did not signify common values and principles.

In this sense, the principle of subsidiarity in the TEU is a 'floating signifier': it is overflowed with meaning because it is articulated differently within the different discourses of Britain and Continental Europe. As a consequence, Britain and Continental Europe have agreed upon the *signifier* 'subsidiarity' (the sound-image) but not upon its *signified* (its concept or content). Hence, agreement upon the *signifier* 'subsidiarity' does not represent any genuine agreement or progress towards a common understanding of European union, or towards any common vision of its future.

As this thesis emphasizes, it is only agreement upon the *signified* that is significant because only this represents genuine agreement and progress. As advocated by German federalism, such would reflect a universal European discourse, and thus, a universal and clear understanding of European union and

the form that it should take. Yet, for the sake of ratification of the TEU, the lack of such a genuine agreement upon signifieds, which would reflect a common understanding of 'an ever closer', was concealed by a facade of agreement upon signifiers. Such a veneer helped conceal the impossible task of ratifying what came to be an unratifiable treaty, as illustrated below in *Section 3.4.3*. In this sense, the treaty concealed the continuation of a conflict in ideas and interests that needed to be effectively and directly confronted before a universal conception and vision of European union could be achieved.

3.4.1. Hollow victories and empty signifiers

In practice, subsidiarity is most often associated with a federalist theory of the state. However, in British-EU discourse, 'federalism' signifies 'centralism' - and it was the signification of the centralization of power at the supranational rather than the national level that the British government opposed. For example, when the ratification debate on the TEU bill opened in Parliament on 20 May 1992, Major emphasized that the TEU marked a rejection of EC centralization, and where it did not, Britain had opted out. He argued that the British Government had successfully managed to make the TEU into a very limited document that enshrined intergovernmentalism and represented a *decline* in the political integration:

> Many of the issues that which are most problematic for us are ones that arise from the application of the original Treaty of Rome not the Maastricht Treaty. The Maastricht Treaty marks the point at which for the first time, we have begun to reverse that centralising trend. We have moved decision taking back towards the member states in areas where Union law need not and should not apply. (Thus, we

> have diminished) ... the old tendency among some of our partners to think that action by the Community was always the best answer.[80]

John Major was able to present the treaty as such a victory against the federalist goals of Continental Europe by emphasizing that a definition of 'subsidiarity' had been written into the treaty as a legally binding principle which stated that decisions should only be taken at the Community level where a compelling case could be made that they were more appropriately taken at that level than at the national level.[81] That is, Major referred to *Article 3b* with its preferred specific reference to 'member states' rather than the *Article A* reference to 'as closely as possible to the citizen'.[82] As such, he was defining subsidiarity in a way that directly opposed its original formulation in Catholic social discourse as a weapon *against* the nation state. For example, following the Danish referendum vote against the treaty, he declared to the House of Commons that the TEU and its concept of subsidiarity represented a move towards intergovernmentalism:

> The Maastricht treaty began to build the kind of European Community that we wish to see. It introduced the concept of intergovernmental co-operation outside the treaty of Rome. It established the principle of subsidiarity rather than centralism.[83]

As this they represented a shift towards intergovernmentalism, Major emphasized that it also represented a move towards the British rationale of parliamentary sovereignty:

> ... common consent in this country is exercised through a parliamentary democracy and through the voices and words of Members of Parliament in this House. As for ... a decentralised Europe (,) I believe that the point that is central to the agreement secured at Maastricht is that Maastricht traced the pattern for the development of

---

[80] *Hansard* (1992) 6th Ser. 208, Col. 268, 20 May. After the Maastricht summit, Major declared 'game, set and match'. (*The Financial Times* (1991) 12 December, p. 3.
[81] See: *Hansard* (1991) 6th ser. 200, Cols. 859-62, 11 December, and 18 December 1991, Cols. 275-86.
[82] Nicoll, W. and T. C. Salmon. (1994) *Understanding the New European Community*. (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf). p. 260.
[83] *Hansard* (1992) Col. 827, 3 June.

> that sort of Europe. That is what lies behind the provisions for intergovernmental agreement rather than agreement only under the treaty of Rome, and that is what also lies behind a number of the other provisions, including subsidiarity. We have begun to build that sort of Europe.[84]

However, Delors announced to the EP and the media that the very same treaty had *relaunched* political integration[85], and other member states also interpreted the TEU in this way.[86] Moreover, to the detriment of Major's attempt to appease Eurosceptic rebels, the German Vice-President of the Commission, Martin Bangemann, declared that the TEU was 'federalist' on the eve of the crucial House of Commons vote on the TEU bill on 4 November 1992.[87]

Thus, the TEU allowed each participant, including the Commission, to claim its own victory. However, by replacing the f-word for 'subsidiarity', the aims of treaty and the possibility of ‘an ever closer union’ had been undermined because the previously signified ‘federal’ future of the EU was now only ambiguous and uncertain. Moreover, in direct contrast to the German federalist aims of Delors, the previously clear federal understanding of ‘subsidiarity’ had been replaced by the ambiguous and uncertain content of 'an ever closer union', and thus, it was so over coded with meaning that it meant everything and nothing. In this sense, from a discourse-theoretical perspective, subsidiarity became an ‘empty signifier’ because it was a signifier without a signified. That is, it is emptied of any precise content due to the ‘sliding of the signifieds under the signifier’. As a consequence, the TEU meant everything to everyone and thus, it meant nothing at all.

---

[84] Ibid. Col. 832.
[85] *Official Journal of the European Communities: Debates of the European Parliament* (1991) 12 December, No. 3-412/232-6.
[86] See: George, S. (1998) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). p. 247.

In sum, the treaty had failed to achieve any steps towards *any* vision of European union because it had not only failed to achieve agreement upon exactly what this process meant, but it had also undermined previous understandings. Thus, it is ironic that the agreed phrase 'an ever closer union' signified the growing uncertainty of that possibility. Rather than bargaining over floating signifiers, the debate upon the TEU should have focused upon fixing the meaning of such terms so that any confusion and misunderstanding over key principles was eradicated. As this research emphasizes, it is agreement over what is signified by European integration and its related concepts and principles which is the crucial starting point for the development of an integrated Europe. As also for the academic analysis of the European integration process, there has to be a universal discourse - a common set of meanings and assumptions - before judgements and decisions can be meaningful and universally applied.

3.4.2. The British presidency and trouble at home

This section will examine the British domestic politics that had an important impact upon the British Government's position upon the TEU and the principle of subsidiarity. In particular, following the Maastricht debate in 9-11 December 1991, there was a British general election on 9 April 1992, as well as the British presidency of the EC from July to December 1992. With regard to the looming general election, and with Thatcher and her Eurosceptic backbench supporters hovering in the wings, it was very important for Major to be able to claim a victory in the pre-Maastricht fight against the 'f-word'. He needed a victory to improve his political position at home, both with the British electorate as well as within his own

---

[87] Nicoll, W. and T. C. Salmon (1994) Op. Cit. p. 291. On this day, the British Government had scraped a victory by only three votes in the House of Commons on the motion to reintroduce the Bill to ratify the Treaty.

party. Indeed, fuelled by Thatcher, protest against the use of the f-word was particularly strong within the Conservative backbenches of British parliament.[88] Many agreed with the sentiments of Roger Knapman:

> I believe in a group of sovereign and nation states co-operating for their mutual advantage, principally through the means of a single market, regulated as little as possible. That is very different from integration, federalism or union.[89]

Moreover, although John Major won the 1992 general election, he only scraped a narrow majority in Parliament[90], and thus, it was apparent that his European strategy would be very vulnerable to any Eurosceptic parliamentary protest. In contrast to the more Eurosceptic position of the previous Thatcher Government, Major's strategy was to put Britain at the 'heart of Europe'. He argued that Britain could better change the direction of the EC 'from within'. With a small parliamentary majority, a large Eurosceptic backbench resistance, and a predominantly Eurosceptic press, it was crucial to Major that his European strategy was successful.

3.4.3. The ratification crisis

Problems began for Major's European policy immediately after the narrow Danish referendum defeat of the TEU on 2 June 1992 (50.7 per cent to 49.3 per cent). This result sparked a TEU ratification crisis in Britain. It exacerbated British anti-Maastricht sentiment, and it was seized by British parliamentary Eurosceptics to reinforce their interpretation of the TEU. The Danish defeat of the TEU also led

---

[88] See for example: Major, J. (1999) *The Autobiography*. (London: HarperCollins.); Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994) Op. Cit. pp.37-60; Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1993) 'Whips or Scorpions? The Maastricht Vote and Conservative MPs', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 46, No. 2. pp. 151-166; Baker, D., I. Fountain, A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1995) 'Backbench Conservative Attitudes to Europe', *The Political Quarterly*, Volume 66, No. 2, pp. 221-233, and Ludlam, S. (1998) Op. Cit. pp. 31-56.

[89] Knapman, R. (1992) *Hansard*, Col. 393, 20 May.

sixty-eight Conservative back-bench MPs to sign a House of Commons motion calling on the Government to use its presidency to make a new clear anti-federal start on EC development. Major soon became a hostage of such Eurosceptics in his own party, who continued to capitalize on such crises as well as upon Labour's determination to undermine his government. In sum, after the Danish result, a disastrous ratification debacle ensued in Britain that was fuelled by a combination of weak political leadership, unfortunate timing, and arcane parliamentary procedures.

More domestic problems for Major followed when Britain took over the British presidency in July - a bad time for a government that was experiencing serious Eurosceptic back-bench opposition.[91] In the face of growing Eurosceptic sentiment, clearing the way for the ratification of the TEU became a priority of the programme of the British presidency. Thus, as described above, during the ratification debate, it was no surprise that Major stressed that the TEU was an intergovernmentalist and minimalist treaty that marked a turning away from EC centralization, and that this was reflected in its anti-federal formalization of subsidiarity.

However, the Conservative backbenches were not satisfied by the replacement of federalism with subsidiarity. As Michael Spicer asserts:

> People say that the Bill is not about federalism ... , it is just a minor step along the road towards greater co-operation. By and large, that tends to be the Government's position. They feel that they were clever in getting the word federalism out of the treaty. That argument does not hold up.[92]

---

[90] 21 seats, compared with 88 in the previous Parliament.
[91] See: Major, J. (1999) Op. Cit; Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994) Op. Cit; Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1993) Op. Cit; Baker, D., I. Fountain, A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1995) Op. Cit, and Ludlam, S. (1998) Op. Cit.
[92] Spicer, M. (1992) *Hansard*, Col. 569, 21 May.

Moreover, as Britain assumed the presidency, the domestic problems concerning the TEU were exacerbated by Thatcher's repeated attacks upon Major's position on the TEU and her repeated calls for a British referendum on the issue. For example, in her maiden speech in the House of Lords on the subject on 2 July, Thatcher declared that to ratify the TEU without a referendum would be:

> ... to betray the trust as guardian of the parliamentary institutions, of the courts and of the constitution ... to betray the trust they have placed in us. ... It is the people's turn to speak. It is their powers of which we are custodians.[93]

Thus, following Lord Tonypandy and Lord O'Hagan above, support of European integration was once again made equivalent to treason - the 'betrayal' of the British nation and the political institutions that defend its interests. Indeed, Norman Tebbit went on to actually describe the treaty as 'close to treason' in mid-February 1993.[94]

However, the Major Government argued that referenda were not 'the way to proceed in a parliamentary democracy':

> The British system is a parliamentary democracy: the Government is accountable to the Parliament and Parliament is accountable to the electorate. The House of Commons approved the British negotiating position before Maastricht and the results afterwards. It has also given a second reading, after the election, to the Bill which would enable the Government to ratify the Treaty. Parliament will have a thorough and detailed discussion of the bill at Committee stage. The Government believes that is the right way to proceed in a parliamentary democracy.[95]

Indeed, the call for referenda in Britain is very rare because it is a procedure that conflicts with the tenets of British responsible and representative government and absolute parliamentary sovereignty. Thus, as the Major Government statement

---

[93] Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994) Op. Cit. p. 46, 49.
[94] Ibid. p. 46.
[95] The Foreign and Commonwealth Office. (1992) *Britain in Europe: the European Community and Your Future*. (London: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office). p. 23.

indicates, by demanding a referendum, Thatcher was betraying the very principles that she was attempting to defend against European integration! As such, she was paradoxically betraying parliamentary sovereignty in order to prevent its betrayal. Moreover, by arguing that such a popular democratic procedure was necessary to achieve public consent, she was actively acknowledging and exposing the limitations of the parliamentary principles that she was attempting to defend, and thus, she was undermining the basis of her own argument for opposition to European integration. These observations suggest that this demand for a referendum was influenced by pragmatism as much as principle. As Conservative Eurosceptic rebels have admitted, they had two principal hopes for a referendum: they were convinced that their position had 'the support of the majority of the British people', and that believed that a referendum would scupper the TEU.[96]

With the Danish and British ratification crises, as well as a narrow referendum victory in France on 20 September, it was becoming increasingly apparent that European-wide public opinion was beginning to swing against Brussels. This led to many member states using subsidiarity as means for *allaying* public concern and possibly hoping to use it to roll back intrusive but beneficial policies such as the aggressive enforcement of competition law. However, the two different formalizations of subsidiarity in the TEU also allowed it to be used in Britain to *exacerbate* such public concerns. As this section has shown, British Eurosceptics used it as a means for invoking national concern about excessive centralization in Brussels.

---

[96] Knapman, R. (1993) 'Bureaucrats Beware', Parliamentary Brief, July.

3.4.4. The Birmingham Summit in October 1992

If this ratification crisis was not bad enough, from September onwards, it was coupled with the ERM crisis. In the face of these crises, Major looked for salvation to the specially convened European Council in Birmingham summit in October 1992, which became one of the least purposeful in the history of the EC. Indeed, this summit failed to develop a solution to either crisis or the Danish problem. However, during the summit, the British presidency had attempted to divert attention from the severe setbacks to its European programme, and from Maastricht initiatives that may invoke more British Eurosceptic fervour, by focussing upon the debate upon 'subsidiarity' and linking it to a general campaign to make the workings of the EC 'transparent' and comprehensible to the public. In all, little was achieved at the summit, which concluded with a new but equally vague declaration on subsidiarity in which the term was replaced by 'nearness':

> We affirm that decisions must be taken as closely as possible to the citizen. Greater unity can be achieved without excessive centralization. It is for each Member State to decide how its powers should be exercised domestically. The Community can only act where Member States have given it the power to do so in the treaties. Action at the Community level should happen when proper and necessary … 'subsidiarity' or 'nearness' is essential if the Community is to develop with the support of its citizens.[97]

Less than two weeks after the Birmingham summit, to improve progress, the Commission submitted a lengthy political, technical and legal analysis of subsidiarity to the European Council and Parliament. This developed the 'two dimensions' of subsidiarity - the *need* for action and the *proportionality* of action – and asserted that the burden of proof in both cases should lay with EC institutions. However, the Commission also argued that subsidiarity could not become an excuse for member states either to blame Brussels for unpopular

actions or to curb the legitimate legislative and executive authority of the Commission.[98] Together with a foreign minister's report, this communication set the stage for the discussion of subsidiarity at the Edinburgh summit.

Despite this communication, and despite the evidence to suggest that the British presidency was at least partly to blame for the existing problems facing European integration, this did not stop the Major government exploiting the growing crisis of confidence in the EC in order to weaken the position of the Commission. When the Commission represents the key supranational body of the EC, this action would strengthen the intergovernmental basis of the EC (represented by the Council of Ministers), and thus, British parliamentary-liberal-individualist preferences. Hence, when the Commission produced a paper on subsidiarity, the British presidency submitted its own paper and insisted that it should form the basis for all discussions. The British paper contained a list of Commission proposals that accorded with the Continental European social democratic discourse and thus, that opposed the perceived British national interest. For example, although they were accepted by all other member states, supranational and social democratic proposals for employee protection and social security, as well supranational measures to protect the environment, were to be scrapped or amended on the grounds that they were against the spirit of the British understanding of subsidiarity. For example, the British Foreign Office criticized an EC proposal that required environmental impact statements whenever any national public policy had environmental consequences:

> How to take account of environmental considerations in policy-making must be up to national governments ... The directive would require changes in fundamental constitutional arrangements such as

---

[97] *Bulletin of the European Communities*. 10-1992, Presidency Conclusions, point 1.8.
[98] The European Commission, 'The Principle of Subsidiarity', SEC (92) 1990 final, 27 October 1992.

> the relationship between government and Parliament and the principle of collective responsibility.[99]

Nevertheless, Britain ultimately failed in its attempt to use subsidiarity as a tool against European intervention, particularly EC environmental legislation. It led only to the further estrangement of its fellow awkward partner, Denmark, which was perhaps the keenest proponent of stronger supranational EC powers to enforce tougher environmental national standards. The result was that Britain finally had to withdraw its aberrant subsidiarity text.

At home, the Major Government was still failing to reassure Eurosceptics in Parliament that subsidiarity was an effective defence against loss of national and parliamentary sovereignty. Many shared the view of Ulster Unionist member, David Trimble, that:

> ... The Maastricht Treaty is a giant step towards a federal European Union and the things that the Prime Minister is clinging to, such as subsidiarity, are meaningless.[100]

Indeed, as Bernard Jenkin argued:

> Subsidiarity - along with the establishment of the union, the single currency, common foreign policy leading to a common defence, the citizenship, the single institutional framework, the Council, the Parliament, the judges and the court presiding over a supreme body of law - is yet another manifestation of the centralised European superstate in the making. History will laugh at those who advocated the treaty in the name of the sovereignty of Parliament, or who said that it would strengthen the role of national Parliaments and was a step towards a Community of nation states. We are already in a legal federation.[101]

As a result, in order to succeed in what can only be considered as an unnecessary paving motion in the House of Commons, the Government was

---

[99] *The Independent*. (1992) 14 December.
[100] *Agence Europe*. (1993) 10 June.
[101] Jenkin, B. (1993) *Hansard*, Column 748, 8 March.

forced to concede a promise not to attempt British ratification until after a second referendum in Denmark (that took place on 18 May 1993).

3.4.5. The Lisbon Summit in June 1992

With the prevailing climate of anti-TEU and anti-Commission protest in Britain, it was evident to Delors that the EC needed a much firmer definition of subsidiarity and explanation of its possible applications than had been developed at Maastricht. Thus, at the Lisbon summit on 26-27 June 1992, Delors presented a report to the European Council on subsidiarity. After discussing the issue, the European Council emphasized the need for this principle to be strictly applied, and called on the Commission and Council of Ministers to examine the steps needed to implement it and report back to the European Council at the Edinburgh summit. The Commission undertook to justify future proposals on the basis of subsidiarity, and the heads of government instructed the Council of Ministers to do the same if it decided to amend an original Commission proposal.[102]

3.4.6. The Edinburgh Summit in December 1992

On 11-12 December 1992, the Major Government sought to fight off its critics by claiming a success at the Edinburgh summit at the end of its 1992 presidency. The British government redeemed its otherwise disastrous presidential performance by successfully chairing this summit. Indeed, all parties present at the summit alleged a breakthrough when agreement was reached on such troublesome issues as the EC budget, enlargement and subsidiarity. However, a declaration on '... certain problems raised by Denmark' offered Denmark a string

of opt-outs from the TEU and stressed the significance for Denmark of a separate text on subsidiarity.

In particular, the priority of the British presidency at Edinburgh was to achieve a new statement upon subsidiarity - 'transferring power from Brussels to London' as John Major described it.[103] In accordance with its preferences, it achieved agreement on a document that amplified the sense of *Article 3b* of the TEU and the imposed a three-stage test which EC legislation had to pass before being accepted under the criterion of subsidiarity. First, the community had to prove that it had the power to act under its treaties before a proposal was considered. Second, it had to then be shown that proposed objectives could not be achieved through national or local action. Finally, any proposed European political intervention must then be the minimum necessary. In opposition to further EC supranational development, this test had affirmed three principles favoured by Britain: first, national powers are the rule and the Community's the exception, second, subsidiarity as defined in *Article 3b* of the TEU, and third, the means to be employed by the Community (when it acts within the first two principles) must be proportional to the object to be pursued. Only in passing did this summit declaration on subsidiarity mention *Article A* of the TEU and its commitment to take decisions 'as closely as possible to the citizen'. Thus, the British Government perceived the Edinburgh criteria of subsidiarity as a success because it was interpreted as a means to block political interference with the internal economic market.

However, the successes achieved at Edinburgh could not mask the poor record of

---

[102] *Bulletin of the European Communities*. 6-1992, Presidency Conclusions, point 1.1.
[103] Nicoll, W. and T.C. Salmon (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 298-9.

the British presidency. In all, combined with the European Monetary System (EMS) crisis, problems with TEU ratification had turned the British presidency into one of the worst in the history of the EC[104] and undermined Major's strategy to put Britain at the heart of Europe. By the end of 1992, the TEU ratification crisis was more acute than ever. Indeed, the TEU bill remains without parallel in post-war British history as a case study in parliamentary dissent. Although the Major leadership survived the rebellion against the TEU, the treaty could only be saved by resorting to a humiliating vote of confidence following, on 22 July 1993, the most serious parliamentary defeat suffered by a Conservative government in the twentieth century over the Social Protocol.[105] In addition to these problems, Britain and Germany were at loggerheads, and John Major seemed to lack the necessary political weight to help save the endangered GATT Uruguay Round. In sum, the attempt to appease Eurosceptic backbenchers (with a small parliamentary majority) with its EC presidency programme, as well with its aim to put Britain at the heart of Europe, had led to a disastrous presidency.

Although domestic preoccupations had made it difficult for the British presidency to take a strong line in Community affairs, it was also apparent to other EC members, as well as to the Commission, that Britain was exploiting its term of presidency to following its own national interests rather than the 'common good' of the EC. Indeed, Britain had successfully fulfilled one priority of its presidency programme that directly served its own liberal-individualist interests: the completion of the internal economic market. In this regard, the British presidency had been an overwhelming success: the internal market was completed in all its essentials, with agreement on some ninety measures - a record for any

---

[104] Dinan, D. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 239.
[105] Baker, D., Gamble, A., Ludlam, S. (1994)Op. Cit. p. 57; Ludlam, S. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 31.

presidency. Although the successful agreement upon this issue may suggest that other members were also following similar national liberal-economic interests, the determination and enthusiasm that this priority was given (and supported at home) by the British presidency throws its poor record on political and social matters into sharp relief, and thus, emphasizes the British presidency's adherence to its own liberal-individual interests (as determined by its national government and parliament) rather than the liberal democratic 'common good' of Europe (as determined at a supranational level by the political institutions of the EC).

Conclusion

This chapter began by presenting democracy as a floating signifier, and thus, as a signifier that is articulated differently within the discourses of the different member states of the EC/EU. As *Section 2* illustrated, this signifier has a liberal democratic signified in Continental Europe, but a liberal-individualist signified in Britain. Ultimately, these different discourses have conflicting notions of state and society, and thus, of the future shape and form of the EU.

Section 3 proposed that both federalism and subsidiarity are also 'floating signifiers': such pivotal signifiers of the debate upon European political integration have a liberal democratic signified in Continental Europe and a liberal-individualist signified in Britain. Thus, these terms become ambiguous within the debate upon European integration between Continental Europe and Britain. Moreover, since there is a *conflict* between these discourses, as illustrated in *Section 2*, this has led to conflicting meanings of such important terms within this debate, as well as conflicting preferences for the form of the 'ever closer union'. As a result,

European integration is obstructed and Britain is perceived as an 'awkward partner'. Explanations for this conflict in hegemonic discourse will be developed in *Chapter 5*.

With regard to these observations, it is instructive to quote Delors reaction to the obstructions caused by Britain over the use of the f-word. He asked: 'what does a word matter, as long as we have the actual thing?'.[106] However, as this chapter has demonstrated, the point is precisely that the opposite had occurred - no progress had been achieved because agreement was finally made on words (that is, the signifiers 'subsidiarity' and 'an ever closer union' rather than 'federalism') but not on the 'actual thing' (that is, what was to be signified by these words).

Thus, differences in the ideas, meanings, and interests of member states were unaffected by the TEU because it failed to address such significant differences between the discourses of the member states. As a consequence, British opposition to European political integration was preserved: the British aberrant parliamentary liberalist conceptions of subsidiarity and 'an ever closer union' were maintained by a treaty which produced agreement upon words but not upon meanings. As this chapter has also illustrated, this important divide was not addressed in subsequent negotiations and declarations.

Yet this thesis proposes that agreement upon what is signified by European integration and its related concepts and principles is the crucial starting point for the development of an integrated and democratic Europe. As for the academic analysis of the European process, there has to be a universal discourse - a common set of meanings and assumptions - before judgements and decisions

(and policy decisions) can be meaningful and commonly applied. In addition, it is such a universal discourse that is necessary to remedy the crisis of confidence in the EU that stems from the lack of a definable and definite framework in which all majorities are 'compound' and minorities are protected.

These crucial problems will prevail in Europe until an attempt is made to develop the discussion on subsidiarity further and link it with broader discussions about democracy in the EU. Certainly, as merely a functional and ambiguous concept, subsidiarity cannot compensate for the lack of democratic guarantees in the EU or help remedy the democratic deficit that exists, and these points are crucial in explaining support for a political and federal European unity on the Continent and the lack of it in Britain. Following the propositions of discourse theory, the European hegemonic project must introduce a master signifier, a nodal point, to retroactively constitute the identity of such floating signifiers as 'democracy' and 'subsidiarity' within a supranational paradigmatic chain of equivalences. As *Chapter 7* proposes, we could quilt such floating signifiers through 'radical plural democracy' to give them a precise, fixed, and progressive signification.

In terms of further EU debate upon subsidiarity, a detailed institutional agreement could help affirm a more universal meaning to this principle, as could the inevitable body of case law on the subject as times goes on - the practical implications of subsidiarity may develop as a consequence of landmark rulings from the Court of Justice. However, the Court of Justice hardly relishes adjudicating such politically charged cases. Thus, although such cases would help develop a universal legal definition of subsidiarity, it is probable that they would also bring to the surface, once again, the conflict of discourse that exist in the EU.

---

[106] *Agence Europe* (1991) 1 July.

The following chapter will apply the discourse-theoretical analytic to help explain *why* British discourse developed in opposition to the discourses of Continental Europe and the initiatives for European political integration.

Chapter Five

Europe, the Other

Introduction

The previous chapter focused predominantly upon the discourse-theoretical concept of discourse to illustrate how the process of European (political) integration has been obstructed because Britain and Continental Europe have different (hegemonic) discourses and thus, different understandings of the same concepts and principles. However, it is crucial to explain *why* British discourse is opposed to other Continental European discourses if we are to understand the British 'awkward' partnership with the EU and its obstruction to European integration. To this end, this chapter applies the discourse-theoretical conception of 'social antagonism' to argue that this divergence in discourse reflects a British antagonism with Continental Europe. It will be demonstrated that the construction of the British identity has involved the construction of this antagonism, and thus, that British-European integration has been obstructed because Continental Europe (and its hegemonic discourse) represents its 'radical (and threatening) otherness'.

Moreover, as *Chapter 3* explained, such antagonisms are both a discursive *response* to dislocation as well as a *source* of dislocation. As this chapter will

demonstrate, the British antagonism with Continental Europe - and hence, with the EU - is a discursive *response* to dislocation. However, as well as this stabilizing function, the British identity has developed in opposition to European integration because Continental Europe has been identified as a *cause* of dislocation.

In all, the discourse-theoretical approach will be applied to elucidate how the British identity has been disrupted by dislocations that have been harnessed through the construction of a social antagonism with Continental Europe (and thus, the EU). It will be demonstrated that gaps opened by such dislocations of the British structure have been filled by emerging hegemonic projects that have the character of myths. These hegemonic projects have attempted to suture this dislocated space, and naturalize the British identity with their claims to universality, by discursively constructing an antagonism with Europe.

In addition, this chapter further elucidates why the issue of (national and parliamentary) sovereignty has made Britain such an aberrant member of the EU. It is also argued that the growing political implications of European integration, as particularly expressed by the TEU, invoked an unresolvable tension within the *contingent articulation* of the discourses of British economic liberalism and parliamentary sovereignty. Hence, the process of European integration exposed the 'contingency' and 'mythical' status of this discursive formation, and created unresolvable disputes within the Conservative Party that played a significant role in the demise of Margaret Thatcher in 1990 and the Major Government in 1997.

It will also be argued that Britain's awkward partnership with the EU is linked to the phenomena of nationalism and racism. This thesis observes that previous research upon British-European integration has not examined the intrinsic link between Euroscepticism, nationalism and racism within Britain. Moreover, this intrinsic link has also been neglected by research upon racism and nationalism in Britain. It is also proposed that previous essentialist and functionalist conceptions of nationalism and racism are problematic. As this chapter aims to demonstrate, a discourse-theoretical approach can provide a new and more productive framework for analysing these phenomena and thus, the phenomenon of British Euroscepticism. However, the analysis will begin with the examination of the British myths (and social imaginaries) that have invoked the antagonism with Continental Europe, and thus, obstructed the process of European integration.

1.0. The significance of myths and social imaginaries

This chapter argues that the construction of the British (discursive system) of (national) identity has involved the development of an antagonism with Continental Europe, and thus, with the EU. The British identity represents a contingent articulation of myths that have conflicted with the process of European integration because Continental Europe has represented their radical otherness. These British myths will be described as 'parliamentary liberalism' and 'the British nation'. Here, the myth of 'parliamentary liberalism' represents the contingent articulation of parliamentary sovereignty and liberal-individualism, as described in *Chapter 4*. This myth has been articulated with the myth of the British nation to form the discursive formation of '(neo-) British national parliamentary liberalism', as reflected in the defence of 'national parliamentary sovereignty'.

1.1. The source of myths

This analysis relates to the propositions outlined in *Chapter 3* that concern social antagonism as a discursive response to the dislocation of the social order. In *Chapter 3*, it was argued that social antagonism should be defined in terms of the presence of a constitutive outside which, at the same time, constitutes and denies the identity of the inside. However, as well as its stabilizing function as a *response* to dislocation, it was emphasized that social antagonism is also a *source* of dislocation. Indeed, every identity is dislocated insofar as it depends on a constitutive outside that both denies that identity and provides its condition of possibility at the same time.[1] Thus, social antagonism is double-edged because it constitutes and sustains an identity by positing a threat to it.

In accordance with these propositions, social antagonism plays an important role in the construction of the spatiality of myths. A myth aims to reconcile the social in the face of structural dislocation, which involves the disruption of the structure by forces operating outside it. Thus, the condition for the emergence of a myth is structural dislocation, and it functions to suture the dislocated space by constructing a new space of representation. That is, it performs a hegemonic role since it aims to form a new objectivity by rearticulating the dislocated elements. As stated above, gaps opened by dislocations of the structure are filled by emerging hegemonic projects that have the character of myths. These myths have come to provide a homogeneous space of representation in Britain by displacing all forces of negativity – such as Continental Europe, and thus, the EU - to the 'constitutive outside', which is both constitutive and subversive of the unity of the inside (that represents the British discursive system of identity).

1.2. Myths and identification

In the condition of *undecidability* that is invoked by a structural dislocation, the decision to select a particular myth is analogous to 'identification' in psychoanalysis, in contrast to the 'rational decision' in previous theories of international relations examined in *Chapter 1*. Here, we can make an analogy between the selection of a particular discourse and the struggle of Lacan's infant in the 'mirror stage' to make sense of its chaotic surroundings.[2] Traumatized by the unbearable experience of dislocation, the Subject searches for an organizing framework that makes its experience bearable. As Anna Marie Smith describes:

> Lacan's infant (mis-)takes the image in the mirror as its own self, and the lure of the mirror image that facilitates this substitution consists precisely in its framed and stabilized character. The infant thereby achieves the sense of itself as a coherent totality, but only through (mis) identification with an external image that remains irreducibly 'other'. In this manner, dependence on otherness, alienation, transitivism and paranoiac knowledge are written into the very principle of our subjectivity.[3]

Prior to the decision, there is no Subject with fully formed desires: there is only a deep anxious need for *order* (and thus, *structure*). Hence, a particular discourse will prevail over others to the extent that it effectively promises to provide a 'minimal consistency'[4] in an otherwise chaotic terrain. Thus, it is primarily *the formal operation* of a myth, its provision of an orderly space, which makes it a compelling site of identification. For example, as Žižek claims:

---

[1] Laclau, E. (1990) *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. (London: Verso). p. 39.
[2] See: Lacan, J. (1977) 'The Mirror Image as Formulative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', in *Écrits*. (London: Tavistock). pp. 1-7.
[3] Smith, A. M. (1998) *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*. (London, New York: Routledge). p. 77, 207.
[4] Žižek, S. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (London: Verso). p. 75.

> One approves of the Law because it is Law, not because it is rational. In a situation of radical disorganization there is a need for *an* order, and its actual contents become a secondary consideration.[5]

In a moment of organic crisis, the Subject becomes acutely aware of the dislocation in the structure in the sense that it has an experience that makes visible the ultimate contingency of all forms of identification.[6] In pursuit of order, we are extremely vulnerable during such crises to hegemonic projects that promise to restore coherence by offering a particular myth that may later become a social imaginary.[7] For instance, despite observable 'rational' reasons for why a majority of British voters should oppose the Conservative Party, a discourse-theoretical approach can explain its electoral success in terms of its *conservative* nature. That is, although British voters may know that it is 'rational' for them to vote for a different party, they have voted for the Conservative Party because it promises order and consistency in its conservation of traditional British ideas - even if these ideas are known to be flawed or outdated.

With regard to the development of such myths, it is apparent that key theoretical ideas of British political and governmental discourse have developed as a response to structural dislocation. As will be illustrated below, the English possessive liberalism of Thomas Hobbes, the English conservatism of Edmund Burke, and the British neo-liberalism of Thatcherism, all responded to the demand for order invoked by structural dislocation (as caused by the English Civil War, the French Revolution and the crisis of social democracy respectively).

---

[5] Laclau, E. and L. Zac (1994) 'Minding the Gap: The Subject of Politics', in E. Laclau (ed.) *The Making of Political Identities*. (London: Verso). p. 35.
[6] Norval, A. (1996) *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*. (London: Verso). p. 13.
[7] See: Smith, A. M. (1998) Op. Cit. pp. 76-7.

Following Laclau, the relation between 'the filling' and the 'filling function' of myths depends upon the size and scope of the dislocation of the structure.[8] When routine expectations and practices are shattered, there is a generalized dislocation of traditional patterns of life. Thus, myths emerge as a possible response to the dislocation, and offer a principle of intelligibility for the new situation. However, as there is no common measure between the dislocated structure and the myth that aims to introduce a new order and a new articulation[9], the content of this myth does not stem *necessarily* from the crisis itself. That the crisis is resolved in favour of a particular myth cannot be deduced *from the terms* of the crisis. Rather, a particular myth may be the only discourse that addresses the specific problems experienced by the groups in question and offers a coherent principle for their interpretation. Its victory may result from its *availability* on a terrain and in a given situation where no other discourse presents itself as a viable hegemonic alternative. The mere fact that it presented itself as the embodiment of 'fullness' can be enough to ensure its acceptance. Again, the discourse of a 'new order' is often accepted not because its content is particularly liked, but because it is the discourse of *an* order, of something that is presented as an alternative to a crisis and a generalized dislocation.[10] The more the organisation of an identity has been dislocated, the more those basic principles will have been shattered, thereby widening the areas of social life that must be reorganized by a mythical space.

However, this does not suggest that any available myth will be accepted. The acceptance of a myth also depends upon its *credibility*, and this will not be granted if its proposals clash with the basic principles informing the organization

---

[8] Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek*. (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell). p. 152.
[9] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 65.

of an identity group.[11] Here, 'credibility' concerns whether a concrete proposal accords with some of the basic principles that organize life. The hegemonic strategy must seem to be consistent with cherished rules, norms, and values. However, credibility can also be a seeming willingness to reject what are perceived as unsustainable and discredited principles - principles that have been identified as the cause of dislocation, crisis and disorder. In sum, to be credible, a hegemonic strategy must be able to respond adequately to problems in society by offering a solution that leads to a 'simultaneous conservation-dissolution of institutionalized ways of life'.[12] Thus, 'history' and 'tradition' are important factors in the development of credible myths and social imaginaries.

In all, with regard to the question of the 'limits to the possible', the mere *availability* of political projects for social restructuration counts more than their *credibility* when structural dislocation goes to the bottom of the social, and thus, the desire for order expands infinitely. That is, the 'filling function' tends to be relatively more important than 'the filling' in times of profound crises. In contrast, credibility becomes extremely important when structural dislocation is not as deep, and thus, debates over concrete proposals for a solution are intense.[13]. That is, 'the filling' tends to be relatively more important than the 'filling function' in times of more manageable crises. Hence, the importance of 'history' and 'tradition' to the construction of a successful myth is linked to - and is relative to - the size of the structural dislocation.

However, it must also be emphasized that, despite the disruptive force of dislocation, there is always 'a relative structuration of the social' that might block

---

[10] Ibid. p. 66.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 152.

the advancement of a particular hegemonic project.[14]Furthermore, as observed by the neo-functionalists in *Chapter 1* and George et al in *Chapter 2*, the form of institutions will influence the fate of political strategies. Indeed, congruent with the propositions of this thesis, George et al argue that the institutional form of British government and politics has posed a serious impediment to the process of European integration. However, in contrast to these previous accounts, a discourse-theoretical approach holds that what may seem as a structural constraint (in the sense of a highly sedimented institutional blockage) might over time be eliminated or transformed into a conjunctual facilitation.[15] As argued below, the myth of 'British parliamentary liberalism' conflicts with the supranational process of European integration, but new emerging myths can challenge and dissolve discourses if they offer more credible alternatives.

Moreover, although the structural account of British-European integration by Preston has observed the possibility of 'structural change' in Britain (as examined in *Chapter 2*), it fails to provide an adequate *explanation* of *how* this change takes place. Furthermore, similar to the neo-functionalist accounts described in *Chapter 1,* the structural change described by Preston tends to follow a teleological rationale rather than being amenable to the more *undecidable* change advocated by this thesis. Indeed, combined with the rejection of reductionism, it is for this reason that this thesis has applied the discourse-theoretical concept of 'discourse' rather than more orthodox and essentialist concepts of 'structure'.

Nevertheless, discourse theory does accept that structural and institutional conditions, and the given distribution of resources, impose important limits to the

---

[13] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 66.
[14] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 153.
[15] Ibid.

possible within the dislocated structure. Here, the most important limit to the possible remains the opposition from antagonistic forces. The struggle for hegemony always occurs in a terrain criss-crossed by antagonisms that simultaneously affirm and block each other's identity. However, the struggles between hegemonic agents are conditional upon 'sedimented' institutional structures that hold a certain 'strategic selectivity'.

This thesis will now turn to the particular British myths that have obstructed the process of British-European integration. Following the propositions outlined in *Chapter 3*, it will be illustrated that the hegemonic articulation of significant British myths has involved the negation of Continental Europe in two senses: the negation of its alternative ideas and meanings, as well as the negation of the people (such as 'Eurocrats') who identify with them. This negation has invoked a British antagonism with Continental Europe, and thus, a resistance to European integration. As will be illustrated, the British hegemonic forces responsible for this negation have constructed Continental Europe, an thus, the process of European integration, as a threatening obstacle to the full realization of Britain's chosen ideas, meanings, and 'way of life'.

2.0. The English myth of parliamentary liberalism

With regard to the contemporary British Eurosceptic attitude towards European integration, the first important myth to be examined is 'parliamentary liberalism'. As a myth, it emerged in England as a response to the structural dislocation caused by the move from agrarian feudalism to agricultural-based mercantile capitalism, and the struggle over property rights between King and Parliament in

the English Civil War (1640-52). These events and demands could not be domesticated, symbolized or integrated within the existing hegemonic discourse of Absolute Monarchy. Its final breakdown occurred because the spatial forms of representation and the discursive structure it supported were confronted with this set of undomesticable events. The presence of such demands and events undermined the British social order because they jeapardized its ability to sustain order and stability. As a response to these dislocating forces, the contingent articulation of 'parliamentary sovereignty' and 'liberal individualism' as the discursive formation of 'parliamentary liberalism' emerged as a suturing myth. As such, it provided a space of representation for social, economic and political demands as legitimate differences and displaced all social antagonisms to its 'constitutive outside'. As examined below, it became a social imaginary held together by the exclusion of any threat to its universalist and rationalist pretensions, such as threats to individual freedom, property rights, and parliamentary sovereignty.

As the English Civil War had invoked a profound structural dislocation, the *availability* of political projects for social restructuration counted more than their *credibility*. The success of parliamentary liberalism as a suturing myth was the result of its availability on a terrain and in a situation where no other discourse presented itself as a viable hegemonic alternative. It was accepted because it represented *an* order and offered the only credible alternative to crisis and dislocation. As previous accounts of the English (and British) aberrant political tradition have not addressed[16], it was this deep anxious need for order (in

[16] For example, the Marxist accounts examined in *Chapter 2* by Perry Anderson, David Marquand, Tom Nairn, and Peter Preston.

response to the traumatic and unbearable experience of dislocation) that helps explain why English subjects accepted this discourse.

For example, writing *Leviathan*[17] in the aftermath of the Civil War, Hobbes had no problem convincing his readers that the demand for order was urgent. For Hobbes, the anxious need for order legitimized the political power of the absolute state.[18] The sovereign monarch was the only solution to the disorder associated with the traumatic and chaotic terrain of the 'state of nature'. In accordance with this theoretical proposition, the traumatic effects of 'Cromwellian Puritanism' that followed the Civil War led to the persistence of constitutional monarchy, and hence, the myth of 'crown-in-parliament'.[19] Thus, the principle of absolute parliamentary sovereignty became hegemonized in England.

This desire for a new principle of order and intelligibility that followed the Civil War had come before the *availability* of the democratic elements that were later articulated within Continental European discourse following the later 'Democratic Revolution', as described in the following section.[20] As this desire occurred before the Democratic Revolution, the responding hegemonic project articulated the *available and credible* oligarchic, hierarchical, and mercantile elements of the city-state republicanism of the Renaissance. In due course, this new hegemonic discourse was aberrant to those that later developed in Continental Europe as a

---

[17] Hobbes, T. (1986) [1651] *Leviathan*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin).
[18] Clegg, R. (1989) *Frameworks of Power.* (London: Sage). p. 5.
[19] See, for example: Nairn, T. (1988) *The Enchanted Glass*. (London: Hutchison Radius). pp. 163-4.
[20] The 'Democratic Revolution' is examined further in *Chapter 7*, and it is a term that was first employed by Alexis de Tocqueville. (Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. (London: Verso). p. 155). On the Democratic Revolution, see: Lefort, C. (1981) *L'invention Démocratique: Les Limites de la Domination Totalitaire*. (Paris: Fayard); Lefort, C. (1986) *The Political Forms of Modern Society*. (Cambridge: Polity Press), and Lefort, C. (1988) *Democracy and Political Theory*. (Cambridge: Polity Press). See also, for example: Ifversen, J. (1989) 'Den Franske Revolution mellem Demokrati og Ideologi',

consequence of the Democratic Revolution, and its prevailing hegemony explains Britain's contemporary awkward relationship with rest of the EU. Indeed, as will be illustrated below, British hegemonic agents successfully defended parliamentary liberalism against the later threat of the Continental European Democratic Revolution, as well as against other perceived threats that emanated from 'Europe, the Other'.

2.1. The revolutionary threat of 'Europe, the Other'

As a new hegemonic project, English parliamentary liberalism was distinct from the 'Absolute Monarchies' that still dominated the Continent, and was also distinct - and in contradiction to - its later and lasting successor: the republican democratic notion of 'popular sovereignty'.[21] As emphasized in *Chapter 4,* the Continental European hegemonic principles of republican democracy and popular sovereignty are amenable to supranational decision-making, but the British hegemonic conceptions of liberal-individualism and parliamentary sovereignty are not. Indeed, English parliamentary liberalism represented 'reform-from-above', which was distinct from the Continental European experience of 'reform-from-below' that was imposed by the Democratic Revolution and its republican democratic ideas. Indeed, as identified in *Chapter 4,* the tension between this English top-down conception of 'reform-from-above' and the European bottom-up conception of 'reform-from-below' is reflected in the contemporary tension between British and continental European understandings of the future shape of the EU.

Slagmark, Volume 13, Summer, pp. 31-52; Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 152-171, 186-7; Smith, A. M. (1998) Op. Cit. pp. 6-41, and Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 192, 247-9, 256-7.

Over two hundred years ago, the Democratic Revolution imposed a new social imaginary upon many Continental European societies. As such, new democratic principles came to constitute new fundamental nodal points in the construction of the political in Continental Europe. This event represented a break with the ancient regime, it designated the end of hierarchic and inegalitarian societies ruled by a 'theological-political' discourse in which the social order was founded upon 'divine will'. Following François Furet, the key moment in the inauguration of the Democratic Revolution was the French Revolution (1789-99) because it introduced something truly new at the level of the social imaginary, the affirmation of the power and sovereignty of *the people*.[22] It was precisely this affirmation that challenged the British social imaginary of parliamentary liberalism and its conception of the power and sovereignty of *parliament*.

Indeed, the Democratic Revolution and its republican democratic ideas threatened to dislocate the universalist and rationalist pretensions of British parliamentary liberalism. The spatial forms of representation and the discursive structure that parliamentary liberalism supported were destabilized because they were confronted with these new alien and revolutionary ideas that they could not domesticate, integrate, or symbolize. Thus, the Democratic Revolution posed a serious threat precisely because it threatened the ability of the existing British social order to sustain order and stability. Hence, the democratic movements that began to sweep through the rest of Europe were renounced as an alien threat.

---

[21] On Britain's aberrant tradition of government, see: Tant, A. P. (1993) *British Government: The Triumph of Elitism.* (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth).

[22] Furet, F. [1981] (1978) *Interpreting the French Revolution*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). p. 109. Translated by Elborg Forster. Originally published as 'Penser la Révolution Francias'. (Paris: Gallimard). As Hannah Arendt argues, the French Revolution had a significantly greater impact upon the Western world than the American Revolution because it was the first to found itself on the legitimacy of the people. (See: Arendt, H. (1973) [1963] *On Revolution*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin). p. 55. Originally published by Viking Press, New York.) It thus initiated a new mode of the institution of the social, as described by Claude Lefort. (See: Lefort, C. (1981) Op. Cit., Lefort, C. (1986) Op. Cit., and Lefort, C. (1988) Op. Cit.

In particular, the founding theorist of English conservatism and forerunner of Nineteenth Century liberalism, Edmund Burke, defended the hegemonic discourse of British parliamentary liberalism against the threat posed by the French Revolution and the new and radical political ideas that it invoked. This deep concern was expressed to a French correspondent:

> Formerly your affairs were your own concern only. ... But when we see the model held up to ourselves, we must feel as Englishman, and feeling, we must provide as Englishmen. Your affairs, in spite of us, are made a part our interest; so far at least as to keep at a distance your panacea, or your plague.[23]

Following the Derridian logic of 'supplementarity', this conception of the French Revolution as a 'plague' exemplifies the notion of a dangerous and alien 'disease' threatening British identity, which, as examined below, was also evident in the discursive construction (and success) of neo-parliamentary liberalism. Similar to Enoch Powell and Thatcher, Burke defended the British tradition of parliamentary government against this threat, but he also defended the traditional and organic British conceptions of liberalism against the more abstract conceptions that developed in the Continent following this revolution. For example, he defended the notion that liberties should be transmitted to the people 'without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right'.[24] Moreover, Burke opposed the notion of 'revolution' *per se*. As the father and key theorist of British Conservatism, he argued that *evolution* (through heritage) rather than *revolution* was the only path to progressive change and national development. As Burke argues:

> You will observe, that from the Magna Charta to the Declaration of Right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an *entailed inheritance* derived from our forefathers ...

---

[23] Burke, E. (1993) [1790] *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Edited by L. G. Mitchell. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). p. 185.
[24] Ibid. p. 119.

> By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of providence, are handed down, to us and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts.[25]

Here, as reflected in the arguments for the defence of parliamentary sovereignty by Churchill and Thatcher in *Chapter 4*, the theoretical basis of this argument is the vague conservative and utiliarian principle that institutions that have lasted a long time have thereby demonstrated their worth.[26]

Moreover, similar to Hobbes,[27] Burke argues that on entering civil society the natural rights of the people must be given to the government for protection. Out of civil society, these natural rights are 'absolutely repugnant' because there is no sufficient restraint on 'passion'.[28] Hence, to provide a 'minimal consistency' of order, the purpose of government was to 'bridle and subdue' these passions.[29] In accordance with this proposition, parliamentary liberalism successfully contained the dislocatory effects of the French Revolution and provided a 'minimal consistency' in Britain through its rationale of 'responsible government'. As Burke declared, affairs of the state must be left to parliament as a means to preserve 'good order':

> Good order is the foundation of all good things. To be able to acquire, the people, without being servile, must be tractable and obedient. The magistrate must have his reverence, the laws their authority. The body of the people must not find the principle of natural subordination by art rooted out of their minds. They must respect that property of which they cannot partake.[30]

---

[25] Ibid. pp. 119-20.
[26] See: Macpherson, C. B. (1980) *Burke*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). pp. 40-1.
[27] See: Hobbes, T. (1986) [1651]. Op. Cit. pp. 41, 61-3.
[28] Burke, E. (1993) [1790] Op. Cit. p. 150.
[29] Ibid. p. 151.
[30] Ibid. pp. 372.

Thus, a notion of government emerged in Britain for which members no longer represented 'particular' interests (those of their constituents), but instead were held to represent the interests of the nation as a whole. The idea that 'good order' lay in the ability of government to determine the national interest was normalized:

> Since government is not (directly) accountable to the people, there is little need for the people to be well-informed about the details of public policy; it is for Parliament, not the unsophisticated public, to scrutinize government decision making. Indeed, order and stability might be threatened by disclosure to those unschooled in responsible judgement: hence parliamentarians are not obliged to be responsive.[31]

Hence, in contrast to Continental Europe, a minimal consistency was successfully achieved by developing a *responsible* rather than a *responsive* conception of government. To preserve 'good order', the British public were reminded that:

> The people of England will not ape the fashions they have never tried; nor go back to those which they have found mischievous on trial'.[32]

As illustrated below, this rationale was re-established by the British hegemonic project of neo-parliamentary liberalism: the people of Britain will not ape the 'alien' projects of Continental Europe nor go back to the European-derived social democratic project that led to crisis in the post-war period. In the process of European integration, Britain is warned against introducing, once again, such a dangerous European 'supplement'.

Thus, despite the dislocatory effects of the French Revolution, British parliamentary liberalism proved resilient and survived precisely because its universal rationale supported the notion that 'good order' required the absolute sovereignty of *parliament*. Any external idea would be considered to be an irrational threat to order because it had not emanated from parliament and those

---

[31] Tant, A. P. (1990) 'The Campaign for Freedom of Information: A Participatory Challenge to Elitist British Government', *Public Administration*, Volume 68, No. 4, p. 480.
[32] Burke, E. (1993) [1790]. Op. Cit. p. 111.

schooled in 'responsible judgement'. By contrast, the Continental European conception of republican democracy supports the notion that order requires the sovereignty of *the people*, and thus, an external idea or supranational process can be considered to be rational and acceptable if it is consistent with popular interests.

Moreover, the continued hegemonic success of parliamentary liberalism in Britain has been aided by relatively passive internal oppositional forces.[33] The seventeenth century English Civil War led to the early development of English capitalism, and thus, the early development of its industrial relations. The English workforce accepted the strictures of parliamentary liberalism as *credible* before the *availability* of the more democratic notions that developed in Continental Europe as a result of the Democratic Revolution. Furthermore, in contrast to the major democratic and constitutional goals of the French Revolution instigated by a mass peasantry, the English Civil War was invoked by property owners with the lesser aim of defending their property rights - a right that was articulated in the English liberal theory of Locke. And, following the Civil War, the more radical democratic and egalitarian ideals within the Cromwell camp were suppressed.

Nevertheless, in the Nineteenth Century, the English working class movement of Chartism (1839-48) did achieve some democratic change, as evident within the political reforms contained in the (1838) 'Peoples Charter'. For example, this movement successfully achieved manhood suffrage and vote by ballot. The constitution of Chartism and its main objectives, such as the key role of the

---

[33] See: Marquand, D. (1988) *The Unprincipled Society*. (London: Fontana); Marquand, D. (1991) *The Progressive Dilemma*. (London: Heineman); Nairn, T. (1988) Op. Cit. pp. 280-321; Preston, P. W. (1994) *Europe, Democracy and the Dissolution of Britain: An Essay on the Issue of Europe in UK Public Discourse*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth). pp.13-4, 18-20, 113-125, and Tant, A. P. (1993) Op. Cit. pp. 125-95.

demand for universal suffrage, were fundamentally developed from the ideas of English Radicalism that were themselves profoundly influenced by the French Revolution.[34] However, after the collapse of Chartism in 1848, republican democratic ideas tend to disappear from the discourse of British resistance. Moreover, although Chartism grew out of anti-democratic resistance and posed a significant radical and revolutionary threat to the presiding elitist system of 'minimal government', its charter was entirely compatible with the rationale of parliamentary liberalism.

The ultimate result of the above is that a *labourist* movement developed in Britain that represented a gradualist and reformist manner of advancing the interests of labour. As such, it contrasted significantly with the more confrontational and revolutionary *socialist* movements that developed elsewhere in Europe with broader republican democratic and social democratic agendas.[35] In due course, and as Preston et alargued in *Chapter 2*, the British labour movement has failed as an internal agent of progressive change and modernist development[36], and by the 1990s, it became 'both imaginatively and practically crippled'.[37] In sum, its goals have been lacking with regard to developing a more republican democratic or social democratic discourse in Britain, and hence, a discourse congruent with those of mainland Europe, and consequently, with the EC project. Concomitantly, as Ashford also observes, the basic theme of the post-war Labour Party was the *national* and *parliamentary* road to 'socialism', and thus, it defended the British parliamentary system of government against the process of European

---

[34] See: Stedman Jones, G. (1983) 'Rethinking Chartism', Chapter 3, *Languages of Class*: *Studies in Working Class History, 1832-1982.* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press). pp. 90-178.

[35] For a comparative analysis of modern European socialist movements, see: Wilde, L. (1994) *Modern European Socialism.* (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth).

integration.[38] Indeed, this defence of national and parliamentary sovereignty has been criticized by academic democratic socialists. As Bernard Crick points out, 'national sovereignty is surely, as Laski argued, the very anti-thesis of socialism'.[39] Moreover, as a result of its consequent opposition to European integration, the Labour Party lost a potentially effective ally in its fight against Thatcherism. In sum, British internal opposition forces have not effectively challenged the hegemony of parliamentary liberalism, not even during the so-called 'social democratic post-war consensus'.

Therefore, the social imaginary of parliamentary liberalism has continued to function as a surface of inscription for political demands in Britain because it has not been successfully challenged by internal or external threats. However, applying the Lacanian and discourse-theoretical propositions examined above, the success of parliamentary liberalism against such potential threats can also be explained by its successful provision of a 'minimal consistency'[40] in response to dislocation. It has been its successful *formal operation*, its ability to provide an orderly space, which has made it a compelling site of identification. It was the deep anxious need for order (in response to the traumatic and unbearable experience of dislocation) that explains why British subjects know that their idea of government is masking a particular form of exploitation, yet still continue to follow it. This Lacanian and discourse-theoretical perspective on the reasons for the success of the British system of government conflicts with the orthodox Marxist

---

[36] See: Anderson, P. (1992) *English Questions*. (London: Verso). p. 307. See also: Marquand, D. (1988) Op. Cit., Marquand, D. (1991) Op. Cit., Nairn, T (1988) Op. Cit. pp. pp. 280-321; Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. pp.13-4, 18-20, 31-32, 113-125, and Tant, A. P. (1993) Op. Cit. pp. 125-95.
[37] Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 20.
[38] Ashford, N. (1992) 'The Political Parties', in George, S. (ed.) *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). p. 120.
[39] Crick, B. (1975) 'Pandora's Box, Sovereignty and the Referendum', *Political Quarterly*, April-June, Volume 46, No. 2, p. 125.
[40] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 75.

assumption of Preston et al that British subjects were simply fooled into consent by an ideological false consciousness constructed by the English ruling elite.

Applying the psychoanalytical theory of Žižek, what previous Marxist analyses of British ideology have overlooked is that the British discourse of parliamentary liberalism did not achieve and maintain hegemony by simply constructing a false consciousness. The British know very well how things really are - for example, that their tradition of government is masking a form of exploitation - but they act 'as if' this ideology is true and serious because it has successfully provided order and consistency, even in the face of profound dislocation. However, as argued in *Section 5.2*, its ability to provide such an effective order was being increasingly challenged by the political 'spill-over' effects of European integration.

In all, this section has demonstrated that the persistence of the aberrant discourse of parliamentary liberalism is crucial to understanding the British opposition to European integration. In particular, this section has emphasized the 'awkwardness' of the British principle of parliamentary sovereignty. As the very rationale of British government, it is non-negotiable. Indeed, the paramount importance bequeathed to parliamentary sovereignty within British hegemonic discourse suggests that European integration is, at best, a means to national rather than supranational ends.

In sum, as key moments of parliamentary liberalism, Britain embraced liberal-individualism, parliamentary sovereignty, labourism, and responsible government, which were distinct and threatened by the later development of Continental European conceptions of republican democracy, popular sovereignty, socialism

(and later, social democracy), and responsive government. The stability of British parliamentary liberalism was seriously challenged by these new political ideas that it could not domesticate, symbolize or integrate. Thus, British hegemonic agents did not merely fail to adopt these ideas, but constructed them as a threat to the English social order. As these Continental European ideas were constructed as 'anti-British parliamentary liberalism', this has posed a significant problem for British-European integration. Indeed, the construction of the limits of the British hegemonic discourse of parliamentary liberalism has involved the exclusion and negation of these Continental European ideas as moments of a chain of equivalence that represent its radical otherness. More broadly, as will be illustrated below, Britain has opposed European integration because Continental European countries, ideas, projects, habits and people - and thus, the EU - constitute 'the Other' in this way.

3.0. The myth of the British nation

Britain's awkward partnership with Europe has not been previously linked to the phenomenon of British nationalism. The analysis of British-European relations has not developed within the same theoretical and methodological discourse as the analysis of nationalism, and thus, our understanding of British nationalism has not had a significant impact upon our conception of British Euroscepticism. This section will address this concern. However, this thesis argues that previous essentialist and functionalist conceptions of nationalism are problematic. It will be demonstrated that a discourse-theoretical approach provides a more productive framework for analysing this phenomenon, and thus, British Euroscepticism.

Nationalism has been traditionally viewed as either a functional response to the structures of modern society or as a primordial, and thus, natural form of human belonging.[41] Both Marxist and liberal theory have conceived nationalism as the ideological cement of the nation-state, which in turn, is seen as providing the best political shell for the capitalist market economy[42], fulfilling the cultural needs of modern growth-oriented societies[43], or masking the class conflicts and factions of modern societies.[44] Reversing the causal relationship between structure and superstructure, other theories have perceived nations and nationalism as basic forms of human association and sentiment[45], which determine the contents of modernity.[46] Rejecting these functionalist and essentialist conceptions of the nation and nationalism, this discourse-theoretical approach follows Jacob Torfing and his conception of nationalism as:

> ... a certain articulation of the empty signifier of the nation, which itself becomes a nodal point in the political discourse of modern democracy and generally functions as a way of symbolizing an absent communitarian fullness.[47]

Significant to the aims of this chapter, nationalist discourse has played an important role in developing the aberrant myths and social imaginaries, such a parliamentary liberalism, that have organized and guided British Euroscepticism. As will now be demonstrated, the myth of the British nation has contributed to the

---

[41] Smith, A. D. (1995) *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era.* (Oxford: Blackwell).
[42] See: Hobsbawm, E. (1990) *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
[43] See: Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
[44] See: Sklair, L. (1991) *Sociology of the Global System*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).
[45] See: Armstrong, J. (1992) 'The Autonomy of Ethnic Identity: Historic Cleavages and Nationality Relations in the USSR', in A. J. Motyl (ed.) *Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities*. (New York: Columbia University Press). pp. 23-43; Fishman, J. (1980) 'Social Theory and Ethnography: Neglected Perspectives on Language and Ethnicity in Eastern Europe', in P. F. Sugar (ed.) *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio). pp. 69-99, and Greenfield, L. (1992) *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
[46] Smith, A. D. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 53.
[47] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 192.

construction of the British antagonism with Continental Europe, and thus, with the EU.

3.1. Nationalism and the Democratic Revolution

Following Laclau and Mouffe, Torfing's conception of nationalism takes Lefort's study of the 'Democratic Revolution'[48] as its point of departure. Lefort claims that society can only be unified in relation to a 'symbolic power' outside society. Such a constitutive power is a symbolic power rather than an actual power of a state apparatus.[49] The relationship between society and this symbolic power is imaginary: the symbolic power that retroactively constitutes and unifies society is itself imagined by the individuals of that society.[50]

For example, in the time of the ancien regime, the locus of symbolic power was 'the Prince'.[51] That is, under the monarchy, power was embodied in the person of the Prince. To maintain legitimacy, he mediated between mortals and gods. If he associated himself with one of the two poles, he would either reveal the gulf between his particular body and the universality he was supposed to incarnate, or become a despot who ruled in his own name. However, the role of the Prince in the configuration of society became obsolete with the secularization of society and the breakdown of the absolute monarchies. In Continental Europe, the Democratic Revolution invoked 'the dissolution of the markers of certainty' and undermined the possibility of embodying symbolic power in a particular body.[52]

---

[48] See: Lefort, C. (1981) Op. Cit., Lefort, C. (1986) Op. Cit., and Lefort, C. (1988) Op. Cit. Here, the argument presented by Torfing follows Ifversen's discussion of Lefort's understanding of the French Revolution. See: Ifversen, J. (1989) Op. Cit.
[49] Lefort, C. (1986) Op. Cit. p. 279.
[50] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 192. See also: Ifversen, J. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 33.
[51] Lefort, C. (1988) Op. Cit. pp. 16-17.
[52] Ibid. pp. 16-19.

Consequently, the locus of power became an empty space. The locus of power could not be occupied: no individual or group could be consubstantial with it. Government could not appropriate power since its exercise was subject to procedures of periodical redistribution and controlled contest.[53] In national elections, atomized individuals chose a government that promised to unify society. This led to the emergence of a purely social society in which the people, the nation, and the state, held the status of universal entities, and in which any individual or group could be accorded the same status.[54] However, the experience was different in Britain, and this difference will now be examined because it helps explain why Britain has defended parliamentary sovereignty against supranational European integration.

3.2. British parliamentary sovereignty and the 'Divine Right of Kings'

The British period of absolute monarchy differed to the Continental European experience in the sense that the English conception of the 'divine right' of kings was quite different to the Continental conception of the 'divinity' of Kings. The British king was human rather than divine, and thus, fallible. Hence, in contrast to Europe, symbolic power was not embodied in a particular body but in particular institutions, the institutions of the crown. The English notion of the 'divine rights of kings' was more acceptable to the public than its European equivalents, and its checks and balances made it more sustainable.

Moreover, the different goals of the English Civil War and the French Revolution inevitably led to different results. The latter was a war against the threat that

---

[53] Ibid. p. 17.
[54] Ibid. p. 18.

absolute monarchies posed to the *economic* interests of the developing propertied and manufacturing classes, whilst the latter was a *democratic* and *constitutional* revolution that required the complete destruction of monarchy. That is, the moderate economic goals of the English Civil War sought to overcome *absolutism* but not *monarchy*. Hence, in contrast to the major political consequences of the French Revolution, no democratic and constitutional obstructions were developed (or desired) in England to prevent the possible return of the monarchy or to prevent the misuse of its power by others.

Furthermore, as described above, the later consequences of Cromwellian Puritanism led to the myth of 'crown-in-parliament'. As a consequence, Crown and State ('Monarchy and Parliament') remained the symbolic constitutive power that provided the unification of English (and later, British) society. That is, it configured English society and determined the national interest. Thus, in contrast to the continent, the location of symbolic power in England/Britain has always been an empty space in the sense that it has always been embodied within institutions rather than particular individuals or groups. That is, no individual or group can be consubstantial with the symbolic power of the realm of Crown and State. Moreover, since it is the institutions of crown-in-parliament that are the locus of symbolic power, then this helps explain the paramount importance that Britain has given to the defence of parliamentary sovereignty, and thus, to obstructing supranational European integration.

3.3. The hegemonic articulation of the myth of the British nation

Wherever it is located, symbolic power is always 'invisible' in the sense that only attempts to exercise power in the name of society can be observed. Paradoxically, the attempt to represent the unity of society always reveals conflicts and antagonisms. Hence, an expansive hegemony must be established in order to occupy, even temporarily the empty space of symbolic power. This will require the authorization of power by referring it back to the empty signifiers of 'the nation' and 'the people', which have been the nodal points in the contemporary political discourses of Western Europe. That is, the 'I speak' must be transformed into 'the nation/the people speaks'.[55] One must be able to speak in the name of the nation and the name of the people in order to become hegemonic. This was very well understood by Powell. As he explains:

> Ask who are 'we' and who are 'they', and you will get an answer in circle; 'we' are those at whose hands we accept compulsion, and 'they' are all those who are not 'we'. ... (T)hat 'we' is the nation ... .[56]

Indeed, as this chapter argues, the British 'we' was successfully constructed by such hegemonic agents through their articulation of the myth of parliamentary liberalism with the myth of the British nation as 'British national parliamentary liberalism'.[57]

However, it is not enough to refer abstractly to what is good for the 'nation/people'. To exercise hegemonic power, it is necessary to hegemonize the empty signifiers of 'the nation' and 'the people' by giving them a particular

---

[55] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 193. See also: Ifversen, J. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 38.
[56] Ritchie, R. (ed.) (1989) *Enoch Powell on 1992*. Extract on "We' and 'They" from a speech to a fringe meeting of Conservatives at the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool,14 October 1981. (London: Anaya Publishers Ltd). p. 125.

content.[58] Hence, nationalism is a myth that provides the empty signifiers of 'the nation' and 'the people' with a particular, substantial embodiment. It constructs the 'nation-as-this' and the 'people-as-one'. As such, the nationalist myth aims to guide social and political action in the name of a particular 'ethnos' (for example, being British) and a particular imagined national space (for example, 'Britain' as the locus of 'Britishness'). This aim has achieved hegemonic success when it manages to obscure differences between the ethnos and the national space.

For instance, Thatcherism successfully achieved hegemony by constructing a 'populist unity' with the British people.[59] As Stuart Hall explains, Thatcherism established this alliance by presenting itself as a great national crusade to make Britain 'Great' once more.[60] This populist unity served to establish an alliance between the British people and the neo-liberal interests of Thatcherism. For example, Thatcher claimed to be speaking in the name of the British people in her neo-liberal opposition to Europe. As she asked:

> Are we then to be censured for standing up for a free and open Britain in a free and open Europe? No. Our policies are in tune with the deepest instincts of the British people'.[61]

Such attempts to homogenize and substantiate the national space will take the form of a number of predicative statements defining what the nation is. However, despite how many essential predicates of the nation are listed, there is always something missing because the true essence of the nation will always escape predication. In the final instance, the homogenization and substantialization of the

---

[57] On Thatcher's construction of the British 'we', see: Hall, S. (1983) 'The Great Moving Right Show', in S. Hall and M. Jacques (eds) *Thatcherism*. (London: Lawrence & Wishart). pp. 30-34, and Fairclough, N. (1989) *Language and Power*. (London, New York: Longman). pp. 179-180.
[58] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 193.
[59] See: Hall, S. (1983) Op. Cit. pp. 30-34.
[60] Ibid. pp. 30-1.
[61] Thatcher, M. (1990) *Hansard*, Col. 453, 22 November.

nation can only be obtained in and through social antagonism: by the discursive construction of 'enemies of the nation'.[62]

For instance, Thatcherism was successfully articulated as equivalent to the interests of the British people by constructing an antagonism with social democratic elements that were negated as a cause of crisis and disorder, and thus, as the cause of the dislocation of the British nation. For example, in this antagonism between 'us' (the British people) and 'them' (those identified with this alien social democratic supplement), the Labour Party was constructed as 'them', whilst Thatcherism was constructed as embodying the intrinsic interests of the British people.[63] Moreover, in accordance with its neo-liberal economic strategy, the negation of the Labourist divide between workers and employers allowed Thatcher to establish employers as *with*, rather than *against*, the British people. As she told readers of *Woman's Own*:

> Don't talk to me about 'them and 'us' in a company ... You're all 'we' in a company. You survive as the company survives, prosper as the company prospers - everyone together. The future lies in cooperation and not confrontation.[64]

As a consequence of the Thatcherite populist unity, 'being British' became identified with the neo-liberal restoration of competition and profitability, and the essence of the British people became identified with self-reliance and personal responsibility.[65] To restore these traditional interests and values to the British people, Thatcher promised to expel the intruding and alien social democratic supplement. As she said, it is time 'to put people's destinies again in their own hands'.[66]

---

[62] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 193.
[63] See: Hall, S. (1983) Op. Cit. p. 34.
[64] As quoted in: Ibid. p. 31.
[65] Ibid. p. 29.

As demonstrated below, Thatcherism also negated 'Europe' as a social democratic alien supplement. Indeed, as will now be illustrated, the homogenization and substantialization of the British nation has been established in and through a longstanding antagonism with Continental Europe, and as a consequence, Euroscepticism has played a key role in the construction of the myth of the British nation.

3.4. The British nation as a discursive response to dislocation

Despite the various sizes and functions of the substance of the nation, nationalism always provides a surface of inscription for social demands, hopes and aspirations. Hence, nationalism, and the social antagonisms it invokes, can be conceived as a discursive response to dislocation. Dislocations emanating from internal or external forces or events (that question, destabilize or dismantle the current regime) foster an acute need for a hegemonic project that can rearticulate the 'floating signifiers' within a discursive order that promises the full realization of the dislocated identities within a unified communal space.[67]Therefore, the role of a hegemonic project of nationalism is to provide the empty signifier of the nation, which symbolizes an absent fullness, with a precise substantive content that the people can identify with. With the transformation of the mythical space of nationalist discourse into a social imaginary, there is no fixed limit to the demands, hopes and aspirations that can be inscribed upon the ideological surface.

---

[66] See: Ibid.
[67] Ibid. p. 195.

Significant to the aims of this thesis, the British nation emerged as a suturing myth of British society. A condition for the emergence of this myth was the dislocation produced by the antagonistic relationship with the Continent, particularly in terms of religious conflict and war. This explanation of the construction of the British nation accords with the observations of Linda Colley:

> It was an invention forged above all by war. Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it. They defined themselves as Protestants struggling for survival against the world's foremost Catholic power. They defined themselves against the French as they imagined them to be, superstitious, militarist, decadent and unfree. And, increasingly, as the wars went on, they defined themselves in contrast to the colonial peoples they conquered, peoples who were manifestly alien in terms of culture, religion and colour.[68]

Moreover, between 1733-1848, dislocation in Britain was also occasioned as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution (1733-1800); the American rebellion (1775-83); the French Revolution and the broader Democratic Revolution; the modernist ideas of the Eighteenth Century French Enlightenment; the war with Napoleon (1805), as well as the internal oppositional force of Chartism (1839-48). The combined dislocatory effects of these forces and events brought the British regions together. As a consequence of such dislocation, the myth of the British nation functioned to suture the dislocated space by constructing a new space of representation, and this required the construction of an antagonism. To obtain the homogenization and substantialization of the empty signifier of the British nation, Continental Europe was identified as the cause of dislocation, and thus, as an object of an antagonism. The logic of equivalence collapsed the differential character of these separate regional identities by means of expanding a signifying chain of equivalence. Here, while being different in other respects, these regional identities became the same - and thus, part of this chain of equivalence - because

of their mutual negation of Continental Europe as a cause of dislocation, and thus, as a threat to order and stability. Hence, the myth of the British nation successfully developed into a new social imaginary and provided a new space of national representation by displacing all antagonisms to its constitutive outside. It has excluded and negated all elements that have threatened its universalist and rationalist pretensions, such as Continental European ideas of international socialism, supranational integration, and so forth.

3.5. British national parliamentary sovereignty

As Bulmer emphasizes, the defence of British sovereignty has both an internal and external dimension. The former relates to *parliamentary* sovereignty and dates from the struggle between King and Parliament of the English Civil War onwards.[69] The latter concerns *national* sovereignty, that is, British (or English) territorial integrity since 1066.[70] However, the contingent articulation of the myths of the British nation and parliamentary liberalism as the discursive formation of 'British national parliamentary liberalism' meant that the defence of national and parliamentary sovereignty became coterminous. The articulation of the British *nation* and *parliamentary* liberalism was reflected in the defence of *national parliamentary* sovereignty. Reflecting this discursive articulation, the myth of the British nation became embodied in the key institutions of crown and parliament[71], thereby inciting identifications within its framework in as many different sites in the

---

[68] Colley, L. (1992) *Britons: The Forging of the Nation*. (London: Yale University Press). pp. 5-6.
[69] See also: Wallace, W. (1986) 'What Price Interdependence? Sovereignty and Interdependence in British Politics', *International Affairs*, Volume 62, p. 367.
[70] Bulmer, S. (1992) 'Britain and European Integration: of Sovereignty, Slow Adaptation, and Semi-Detachment', in S. George (ed.) Op. Cit. pp. 26-7.
[71] On the particular significance of the monarchy in the construction of the British nation, see: Colley, L. (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 195-236; Cannadine, D. (1983) 'The Context Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the Invention of Tradition, 1820-1977', in: E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press), and Nairn, T. (1988) Op. Cit.

social as possible. This articulation served to reinforce and broaden the defence of sovereignty. Since parliament was now the locus of *British* rather than *English* symbolic power, (configuring *British* society and determining its *national* interest), defending *national parliamentary sovereignty* became the very rationale of British government. Hence, defending the sovereignty of parliament was now even more important than before because it was now responsible for determining the interests of the British nation rather than just the English region.

This resolute defence of national parliamentary sovereignty has obstructed the possibility of supranational British-European integration. It has meant that Britain has perceived European integration as a means to national rather than supranational ends, and thus, it has tended to be perceived as an awkward partner. Moreover, as will now be examined, following a post-war social democratic interruption, Thatcherism achieved hegemonic success by re-establishing moments of this traditional British discursive formation. This was accomplished by a reinforcement of the traditional British antagonism with Continental Europe. However, with the new phenomenon of European integration, it was the new institutions and bureaucrats of the EC that became the main objects of this antagonism since these were now perceived to represent the greatest threat from 'Continental Europe, the Other'.

4.0. Thatcherism and British 'neo-national parliamentary liberalism'

The severe dislocation caused by the Second World War dissolved the British discursive formation of 'British national parliamentary liberalism'. Therefore, following the war, Britain looked for a new available discourse that could restore

order and bring a speedy recovery. Moreover, a *credible* alternative was required that could bury the discredited traditional British ideas that had become equivalent to high unemployment and extreme right politics, and thus, with the causes of fascism and war. Consequently, following the example of Continental Europe, a social democratic discourse was established in Britain during the post-war period.

However, the profound dislocation that resulted from the war experience did not weaken the myth of the British nation. As the Continent began to develop its plan for a supranational Europe that could overcome the nationalism that it blamed for the rise of fascism and war, Britain's war victory only led to a renewed belief and pride in the myth of the British nation. Indeed, the war victory served to exacerbate Britain's belief in its superiority over Continental Europe and the war experience itself reaffirmed the conception of Europe as its 'threatening other'. The British myth of parliamentary sovereignty also survived the consequences of the dislocation invoked by the Second World War, and was heralded as the best way to establish a social democratic road to recovery in Britain. Indeed, both Conservative and Labour post-war governments opposed supranational European integration on the basis of their defence of national and parliamentary sovereignty.[72]

Therefore, it was only the liberal moment of the traditional British social imaginary that was dissolved as a consequence of the war experience. The continued defence of British national and parliamentary sovereignty meant that social democracy could only be established at the *national* level, and consequently, the post-war Continental European project for a supranational social democratic

---

[72] See, for example: Baker, D. and D. Seawright (eds) (1998) *Britain for and Against Europe: British Politics and the Question of European Integration*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press). pp. 56, 83-85; George, S. (ed.) (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 8-10, 120, 144.

project was rejected. Hence, the traditional British social imaginary of 'national parliamentary *liberalism*' was replaced by *national parliamentary social democracy*, and thus, the *national* and *parliamentary* moments that opposed European integration maintained intact.

4.1. The return of British national parliamentary liberalism

However, the hegemony of the British post-war social democratic project was short-lived. Conceived as the cause of the structural dislocation experienced in the 1970s as a result of a culmination of national and international crises, it was replaced by the hegemonic project of 'Thatcherism' by 1979.[73] In response to this structural dislocation, this neo-liberal hegemonic project emerged as a new suturing myth for British society. It began to redefine the terms of the political debate and set a new agenda by returning to traditional British liberal elements.

Thatcherism presented itself as the only credible alternative to the problems perceived to be caused by social democracy. However, as the 1970s crises were not as profound as the structural dislocation caused by the English Civil War or the Second World War, the *credibility* of political projects for social restructuration counted relatively more than their *availability*. Neo-liberalism was credible in both senses identified above in *Section 1.2*. First, it was credible because it was consistent with, and borrowed extensively from, traditional and British ideas of politics, economics, the family, nation, race, gender, sexuality, and so forth. That

---

[73] See, for example: Jessop, B., Bonnett, K., Bromley, S. and T. Ling (1988) *Thatcherism: A Tale of Two Nations*. (Cambridge: Polity Press). pp. 77, 164-9; Gamble, A. (1994) *Britain in Decline: Economic Policy, Political Strategy, and the British State*. Fourth Edition. (London: Macmillan). p. 186-225, and Hall, S. and M. Jacques (eds) (1983) Op. Cit. pp. 23-34, 79-105, and Overbeek, H. (1990) *Global Capitalism and National Decline: The Thatcher Decade in Perspective*. (London: Unwin Hyman) pp. 141-175. For a critical discussion of the various approaches to Thatcherism and

is, it promised a *return* of the traditional rationality, meanings and ideas that had previously been articulated and normalized by the discursive formation of British national parliamentary liberalism. It could be properly described as a '*neo*-liberal' project because it reflected a *return* to the traditional British liberal ideas that had been previously displaced by the social democratic post-war consensus. Second, it demonstrated a willingness to bury the 'alien', unsustainable and discredited social democratic principles that were seen to be responsible for structural dislocation and Britain's general decline. Indeed, Thatcherism promised to restore order and Britain's former world status by removing this dangerous supplement that had infected the British nation.

As Hall argues[74], the neo-liberal ideas of Thatcherism were articulated to form a new hegemonic project by constructing an antagonism with the existing social democratic discourse. Hence, a negated chain of equivalence was constructed between elements that were identified with the crisis of social democracy. For example, 'social democracy' became equivalent to 'burgeoning bureaucracy', 'centralism', 'collectivism', 'consensus politics', 'inefficient corporatism', 'European union', 'federalism', 'nationalisation', 'protectionism', 'regulation', 'socialism', 'statism', 'trade unionism', and so forth. For instance, as demonstrated below, the process of European integration was negated as a Continental European strategy for a social democratic superstate that would impose 'burgeoning bureaucracy', 'centralism', 'collectivism', and so forth, upon Britain. As Hall demonstrates, the Labour Party was also discursively articulated as equivalent to these negated and displaced social democratic elements. It was constructed as part of the discredited power bloc and state apparatus, and thus, as riddled with bureaucracy and anti-

---

its many different meanings, see: Jessop, B., Bonnett, K., Bromley, S. and T. Ling (1988) Op. Cit. pp. 5-9, 24-51, 68-98.

[74] Hall, S. (1983) Op. Cit. pp. 27-34.

British 'socialist' ideas. As identified with social democracy, such negated elements were held responsible for crisis, chaos and decline.

In contrast to these negated and displaced ideas, Thatcherism promised individual freedom and enterprise (as opposed to the sterile power of state managers or the trade unions); the moral and political rejuvenation of the British nation (rather than its terminal decline), and decisive leadership (as opposed to the muddle of consensus politics and an overburdened and inefficient welfare state). Thus, combined with repeated attacks upon elements that were negated as equivalent to the crisis of social democracy, the celebration of individual freedom, the free market, entrepreneurship and 'Britishness', were all important moments in the hegemonic discourse of Thatcherism.

As indicated above, similar to Powell, Thatcherism applied the British conservative logic of Burke as well as his construction of 'Europe' as a threat to the order and stability of the British identity. Indeed, Powell played a significant role in the emergence of the myth of Thatcherism, and thus, Thatcherite Euroscepticism. Powell had been a key proponent in development of neo-liberal economics from the 1950s onwards, and his economic views began to become persuasive within the Conservative Party with the deepening crisis of social democracy in the 1960s. At this point, he began to articulate his economic liberalism with political nationalism.[75] His economic critique of social democracy and European economic integration became linked with the political nationalist construction of the threat posed by immigrants[76] and European political integration, as well as a defence of

---

[75] Gamble, A. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 141, Jacques, M. (1983) 'Thatcherism - Breaking Out of the Impasse', in S. Hall and M. Jacques (eds) Op. Cit. p. 51.
[76] Hall. S. (1983) Op. Cit. p. 38.

the Ulster Protestants and the need to maintain the Union.[77]. Combining these two aspects, Powell was instructive in developing the Eurosceptic argument that economic advantages could never justify the sacrifice of national and parliamentary sovereignty, an argument most explicit in the debate upon the TEU.[78] Thus, Powell provided a significant intellectual influence upon the return of the hegemonic articulation of the myth of the British nation with parliamentary liberalism, as represented by the hegemonic project of Thatcherism.

With time, this neo-liberal project effectively replaced social democracy. That is, it became the new social imaginary that provided a space of representation for political, social and economic demands as legitimate differences and displaced all social antagonisms to its constitutive outside. As a new social imaginary that brought a return of traditional British ideas and values, neo-liberalism had successfully hegemonized, and thus re-established, those important signifiers of parliamentary liberalism (freedom, individualism, the free market, and so forth) that had become floating signifiers during the post-war social democratic period. This was achieved by successfully negating and displacing the signifiers of the old social democratic discourse (socialism, 'collectivism', 'bureaucracy, and so on) as equivalent to crisis, chaos and national decline.

4.2. The return to order

Congruent with the myth of parliamentary liberalism and the Burkean tradition of responsible government, Thatcherism promised a return to order through an authoritarian restoration of strong government and decisive leadership. This

---

[77] Gamble, A. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 141.
[78] Forster, A. (2002) *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties Since 1945*. (London, New York: Routledge). pp. 70-1, 91.

promise proved to be popular with the British public. Indeed, empirical analyses of voting statistics cannot explain the paradoxical success of Thatcherism: that is, there is substantial evidence that many voters supported Thatcherism although they did not support or gain from the 'literal' content of its policies.[79] However, by interpreting it as a response to dislocation, a discourse-theoretical approach can make sense of its electoral success: following the conservatism of Burke, it provided a clear promise of 'good order' through 'strong government' as well as the promise to make people feel good about being British again. Therefore, by providing a 'minimal consistency' in the face of dislocation, Thatcherism became a defining framework for British politics, and a framework for identification on the part of enough voters, including those voters who would not benefit from a majority of its policies.

To elucidate, as a new social imaginary, many political demands of the hegemonic project of Thatcherism signified much more than their 'literal' content. For example, as emphasized below, obstructions to European integration were not merely advanced as rational policy positions, they were linked to the defence of the order and stability of the British nation against a European conspiracy to re-introduce a dislocating socialist threat. To this end, following Burke and Powell, Thatcher sought popular consent by employing conservative logic and the threat posed to 'good order' by 'Europe, the Other' rather than relying upon rational theoretical arguments.

Thus, once again, the myth of British parliamentary liberalism had proved popular, despite its anti-democratic and negative economic elements, because it promised a minimal consistency in the face of dislocation caused by a dangerous and 'alien'

---

[79] Smith, A. M. (1998) Op. Cit. p. 164.

supplement. That such social imaginaries are successful in terms of their provision of order and consistency rather than their content is expressed by the observation that - rather than high unemployment, unpopular tax initiatives, decline in social welfare, education, housing, and so on - it was the failure of the Conservative Government to maintain order and leadership, and effectively provide a minimal consistency in the face of European integration, that led to its demise. As illustrated in *Section 5.2*, the downfalls of both Thatcher and Major were invoked by their failure to provide a coherent order and effective leadership in response to the process of European integration.

In sum, Thatcherism re-articulated the British myth of parliamentary liberalism as a response to the structural dislocation invoked by the crisis of social democracy. To achieve hegemony, it successfully negated social democracy as a dangerous alien supplement that was the cause of dislocation. By promising a return to traditional British values, Thatcherism was constructed as the only credible path to the return of order and stability. Hence, this hegemonic project gained support not because its claims were considered to be rational or true, but rather because it offered a principle of order and intelligibility at this time of crisis. Thatcherism represented 'hegemony-as-normalization' as opposed to a 'hegemony-of-domination'.[80] Moreover, as for previous projects, Thatcherism successfully achieved hegemony by articulating its political agenda with notions of the 'British nation' and 'ethnos', as examined above and developed further below.

[80] See: Smith, A. M. (1994) *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). p. 40.

4.3. Euroscepticism and British neo-liberalism

The upshot of the above is that the construction of this new Thatcherite social imaginary led to increased Euroscepticism in Britain since Continental European ideas, and therefore, the ideas embodied within the EU, were also negated and displaced as equivalent to the crisis-ridden ideas of social democracy. That is, they were also articulated as moments of the negated chain of social democratic equivalences. Thus, Thatcher and her Eurosceptic supporters warned that the Continental European strategy for European integration would re-establish a dangerous socialist (or social democratic[81]) supplement into Britain: it represented the potential threat of a Continental European social democratic super-state that would impose 'burgeoning bureaucracy', 'centralism', 'collectivism', and so forth. For example, an equivalence between 'social democracy', 'bureaucracy', 'centralism', 'socialism', 'European union' and 'crisis' is directly and succinctly articulated in Thatcher's address to the Conservative Party Conference in October 1988:

> Today, that founding concept (of economic liberty) is under attack from those who see European unity as a vehicle for spreading socialism. We haven't worked hard all these years to free Britain from the paralysis of socialism only to see it creep through the back door of central control and bureaucracy in Brussels.[82]

Similarly, in her Bruges speech in September 1988[83], Thatcher attacked Commission initiatives for regulating the internal market, centralizing power in Brussels, and for pursuing common rules on the protection of workers. The ideas of Jacques Delors were presented as a socialist attack upon the concept of the

---

[81] It is apparent that Thatcherism, as well as the popular press, discursively articulated and negated 'social democracy' as equivalent to 'socialism'.
[82] See: http://www.euroscep.dircon.co.uk/bg-index.htm
[83] See: Thatcher, M. (1988) *The European Family of Nations*. Speech given at the College of Europe, on the State and Future of the European Communities', Bruges, 20 September. In:

EC as embodied in the Treaty of Rome, which she conceived as a charter for economic liberty. She claimed that his socialist ideas would lead to a highly damaging 'European conglomerate'[84] and 'European super-state' that would undermine the liberal economic objectives of the Treaty of Rome and enforce 'socialism' upon Britain from a supranational level. As she declared:

> (W)orking more closely together does not require power to be centralised in Brussels or decisions to be taken by an appointed bureaucracy.
>
> Indeed, it is ironic that just when those countries such as the Soviet Union, which have tried to run everything from the centre, are learning that success depends on dispersing power and decisions away from the centre, some in the Community seem to want to move in the opposite direction.
>
> We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels.[85]

Such 'European super-statism' was also rejected - as well as ridiculed - by the Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, at the Conservative Party Conference in 1995:

> ... the foreign and defence policies of this country will not be dictated to us by a majority vote of a council of ministers ... (otherwise, in the future,) the European Commission might want to harmonise uniforms and cap badges, or even metricate them. The European Court would probably want to stop our men fighting for more than forty hours a week. They would have sent half of them home on paternity leave.[86]

In particular, European social initiatives were negated as equivalent to socialism, and thus, the crisis of social democracy. For example, as Thatcher argued: 'From all the accounts that I have received about the social charter, it is more like a

---

Harryvan, A. G. and J. Van der Harst (eds) (1997) *Documents on European Union*. (London: Macmillan). pp. 242-7.

[84] Ibid. p. 243.

[85] Ibid. pp. 243-4.

[86] Portillo, M. (1995) His ('Who Dares Wins') Speech as Defence Secretary at Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool, 10 October, http://www.conservative-party.org.uk

Socialist charter'.[87] Similarly, with regard to the Social Chapter of the TEU, John Major later declared:

> We reject, and will continue to reject, the Social Chapter. France can complain as much as it likes ... Let them call it social dumping. I call it dumping socialism.[88]

British Eurosceptics have also described this socialist threat as the consequence of a 'French-German' conspiracy. For example, the Conservative Government vice-chairman, Patrick Nicholls, claimed that ministers would resist, 'some bastardised, federalised European destiny, actively and fawningly crawling to France and Germany'.[89] Similarly, Bill Cash described a "German-Russian condominium", of which the European Union would form the western pillar'.[90]In addition, Nicholas Ridley depicted European monetary union as 'a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe'.[91]

In sum, European integration was discursively constructed as a threat to the rationale and pretensions of British neo-liberalism, and thus, as a threat to the order and stability that had been re-established after the supplement of social democracy had been removed. Following Burke, Thatcherite Eurosceptics argued that European integration would reimpose an alien supplement that we had already found to be 'mischievous on trial'.

---

[87] Thatcher, M. (1989) *Hansard*, Col. 470, 18 May.
[88] Major, J. (1993) Speech at Conservative Party Meeting, 27 February. As cited in Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994) 'The Parliamentary Siege of Maastricht 1993: Conservative Divisions and British Ratification', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 47, No. 1, pp. 52-3.
[89] Nicholls, P. (1994) 'Why Britain Ought to Remain the Sceptical Man of Europe', *The Western Morning News*, 23 November. p. 4.
[90] Stephens, P. (1997) *Politics and the Pound*. (London: Macmillan).p. 350
[91] Lawson, D. (1990) 'Saying the Unsayable about the Germans'. Interview with Nicholas Ridley, the Secretary State of Industry. *The Spectator*, 14 July, p. 8.

4.4. Euroscepticism and absolute parliamentary sovereignty

As emphasized by this thesis, for many British Eurosceptics on the left[92] and the right, the longstanding main concern has been that European integration poses a direct to threat to the British principle of absolute parliamentary sovereignty. As explained above, the principle of parliamentary sovereignty was not dissolved by the social democratic post-war consensus, and thus, this aspect of Euroscepticism predates the neo-liberal moment. However, the concern for parliamentary sovereignty intensified with the growing political implications of membership, as reflected in the TEU. As declared by the Conservative MP, Michael Spicer:

> In the United Kingdom it (the TEU) would have the profoundest possible consequences for the very foundation of the constitution. This rests above all on the notion that the people exert their sovereignty through a Parliament which is the supreme authority in the land. An essential element of this supremacy is that Parliament can effect whatever changes it chooses, including, often especially, amending the laws passed by a previous Parliament. The commitment at Maastricht to the 'irrevocable' is in direct contrast to this. ... In this sense, Maastricht is a torpedo aimed but not yet fired at the keel of British democracy.[93]

Following Dicey's presentation of parliamentary sovereignty as an 'undoubted legal fact', this argument has a more substantial rational theoretical basis than the Burkean conservative logic of Powell and Thatcher. For example, Powell explains to a French audience in Lyon in 1971:'

> ... your assemblies, unlike the British Parliament, are the creation of deliberate political acts. The notion that a new sovereign body can be

---

[92] Representing the left and its preference for the parliamentary road to socialism, Tony Benn argued: ' Britain's continuing membership of the Community would mean the end of Britain as a completely self-governing nation and the end of our democratically elected Parliament as the supreme law-making body of the United Kingdom'. (Benn, T. (1974) *The Common Market: Loss of Self Government*, 29 December. Letter sent to his constituents in Bristol South East as a New Year Message for 1975. In: M. Holmes (ed.) (1996) *The Eurosceptic Reader*. (London: Macmillan). p. 38.

[93] Spicer, M. (1992) *A Treaty Too Far: A New Policy for Europe*. (London: Fourth Estate) pp. 13-4.

> created is therefore as familiar to you as it is repugnant, not say unimaginable, to us.[94]

In addition, as observed in *Chapter 4*, *Section 1.0.*, Lady Thatcher argued that the TEU should be rejected on the basis that it threatened parliamentary institutions that were 'far older than those in the Community'.[95] However, all these Eurosceptic arguments share Burke's concern that Europe represents a serious threat to those schooled in 'responsible judgement'.

In sum, these two sections have demonstrated that European integration has been perceived as a direct threat to order and stability because it threatened the discourses of 'neo-liberalism' and 'parliamentary sovereignty' that are articulated as 'neo-parliamentary liberalism'. Thus, as for all discourses, the constitutive limits of this discursive formation were constructed in relation to a threatening constitutive outside. In the same way that parliamentary liberalism had previously constructed the republican democratic ideas of Continental Europe as its constitutive outside (as described in *Section 2* above), the return of this traditional British discursive formation led to the negation and displacement of the social democratic ideas of Continental Europe and its supranational project for European integration. As with its previous construction, the development of this European 'radical otherness' was reflected in a British antagonism with Continental Europe. Britain opposed the process of European integration because it was identified with 'Europe, the Other'. Similar to its previous manifestations, British neo-parliamentary liberalism had identified Continental Europe as a cause of dislocation, and thus, it promised to restore order and stability by obstructing its influence.

---

[94] Powell, E. (1971) *Britain and Europe*. Speech delivered in Lyons,12 February. In: M. Holmes (ed.) (1996) Op. Cit. p. 85. Previously published in: E. Powell (1971) *The Common Market: The Case Against.* (Elliot Right Way Books).

The following section will examine the discourse-theoretical propositions that help elucidate *why* the construction of the British national identity has required the establishment of an antagonism, as discursively articulated with Europe.

5.0. The construction of British identity

This chapter has argued that the British discursive system of national identity has comprised of a contingent articulation of the myth of parliamentary liberalism and the myth of the British nation. After being re-established by Thatcherism, this discursive formation could be described as 'British (neo-) national parliamentary liberalism'. As indicated above, the limits of this discursive formation have been established in relation to Continental Europe, and thus, the EU, as its radical and threatening otherness or 'constitutive outside'. This constitutive outside is a discursive exteriority that cannot be related to the moments within the British discursive formation through relations of simple difference, since it has the form of a 'radical alterity' that threatens and disrupts its discursive system of differences. This constitutive outside simultaneously constitutes and negates the limits of the British discursive formation from which it is excluded. It is an outside that blocks the identity of the inside, but is nonetheless a perquisite for its construction. As the 'constitutive outside' is coterminous with 'social antagonism', it can therefore be affirmed that the British social antagonism with Europe simultaneously represents the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of the British discursive system of identity.

---

[95] Thatcher, M. (1993) *Speech in the House of Lords*. 7 June, http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmhansrd.htm

To elucidate further, the limits of this British discursive system of identity have been established by the exclusion of a threatening radical alterity, which does not present itself as yet another *difference* but involves the expansion of a chain of *equivalence*. The negated elements of this chain are somehow considered to pose a threat to its rationale and pretensions. Continental European countries, ideas, and people have become caught up in this chain of equivalence.

Overall, the British antagonism with Europe has constituted and sustained the British identity, but only by being identified as a threat to it. As this chapter has illustrated, British myths have functioned to suture dislocated spaces, but in turn, they have led to an antagonistic relationship with Europe that has invoked further dislocations. As previous accounts of the British-European integration have not addressed, the antagonism with Europe has been a major source of stability *and* dislocation for the British identity in this way, and the result of the latter has been a conflict with the EU and its initiatives for European integration. Indeed, this antagonism helped to unify and sustain the hegemonic project of Thatcherism, but it also meant that the process of European integration represented a serious threat to its universalist and rationalist pretensions as well as its ability to provide order and stability. As *Section 5.2.* demonstrates below, the spatial forms of representation and the discursive structure that Thatcherism supported were confronted with a process that it could not be domesticated or symbolized, nor inscribed upon at the level of the social imaginary. Thus, European integration posed a serious threat to the hegemony of Thatcherism and successive Conservative governments.

5.1. The British identity and the antagonism with Europe

Following Derrida, the British obstruction to European integration is guided by the illusion that the annihilation of the antagonistic force will permit us to become the fully constituted 'we' that we have always sought to be. For example, the British Eurosceptic struggle against European integration is necessarily filled out by the illusion that afterwards, when 'European interference' is retracted, Britain will achieve its full identity, be a sovereign nation, realize its full potential, reclaim its former global dominance, and so forth. Here, Britain has tended to perceive Continental Europe as simultaneously a foreign invader and an insidious enemy within. It is an alien and geographically detached continent, while at the same time it has penetrated deep into the British nation (via Catholicism, socialism, social democracy, EU policy, and on). This paradoxical 'doubleness' accords to the Derridian logic of 'supplementarity': essentialist and metaphysical discourse tends to make a distinction between the privileged, self-identical essence and its harmless, non-constitutive supplement, which can be added or subtracted without affecting essential identity. However, a Derridean deconstructive reading of the essentialist and metaphysical discourse reveals the subversive character of this external supplement, which positions itself as a necessary completion of the inside, and in this manner shows that the inside has always remained incomplete on its own.[96]

In accordance with this logic of supplementarity, British Eurosceptics perceive Continental European meanings and ideas (social democracy, European Commission initiatives, and so on) as a pure addition to Britain, initiatives of an alien culture that can be 'repatriated' without damage to the true British nation.

However, such initiatives are also portrayed as a dangerous supplement, as the embodiment of an 'enemy within' which must be countered by a British national solidarity and a patriotic commitment to rebuilding the British nation.

As illustrated in *Chapter 3, Section 4.4.*, Žižek's Lacanian conception of social antagonism deepens our understanding of social antagonism as constitutive of social identity. Similar to Derrida, he argues that the construction of the Other is necessary for identification, and the Subject will hold this antagonistic force responsible for the blockage of its full identity. That is, the Subject will establish a social antagonism with an external enemy because it is considered to deny the full constitution of its identity. As such, it is identified as a cause of dislocation. However, Žižek observes that what is negated in social antagonism is always already negated.[97] There is a force of negativity that is prior to social antagonism. This force is the 'Lacanian Real', the traumatic kernel which always resists symbolization. Thus, in Lacanian terms, it is necessary to distinguish antagonism as *real* from the social *reality* of the antagonistic fight.[98]

Thus, for Žižek, the point is not that 'we' are nothing but the drive to annihilate the antagonistic force that prevents us from achieving our full identity. Rather, the crucial point is that the antagonistic force is held responsible for denying our full identity, and this permits the externalization of our constitutive lack as subjects to the negating Other, which thus becomes the positive embodiment of our self-blockage.[99] Hence, as for Derrida, the annihilation of the Other merely confronts the Subject with its own incomplete identity: it is not the external enemy that prevents identity from becoming fully sutured. Following Lacan, Žižek explains

---

[96] See: Smith, A. M. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 74.
[97] See: Ibid. pp. 249-60.
[98] Ibid. p. 253.

that what is negated in social antagonism is always already negated because the Real is a force of negativity that is prior to social antagonism.

Applying these propositions, the British antagonism with 'Europe' can be conceived as a discursive response to the dislocation of the British identity, and defined in terms of the presence of a Continental European constitutive outside which, at the same time, constitutes and denies this identity.[100] In sum, British Eurosceptics believe that the European integration is as an antagonistic force that is *denying* the British identity because it is identified as a cause of its dislocation. As an alien supplement, it denies the possibility of a fully constituted British identity. However, the possibility of this British identity is already blocked by the Lacanian Real, and the identification of European integration as an antagonistic force actually *constitutes* this identity by externalizing this constitutive lack.

5.2. European integration and structural dislocation in Britain

The foregoing emphasizes how the processes of Europeanisation could represent a profound dislocation for the myths of British nationalism and parliamentary liberalism. That is, similar to the predictions of the structural and functional accounts of the process of European integration examined in *Chapters 1-2*, it could be argued that the processes of globalisation and Europeanisation are dislocating the ideas of the nation-state (such as the national parliamentary sovereignty) as the privileged terrain of British political, economic, and social activity. Indeed, all the accounts of British-European relations described in *Chapter 2* suggest that:

---

[99] Žižek, S. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 253.
[100] Laclau, E. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 17.

> At the level of British decision-makers (who are having increasingly to cope with European and global concerns) nationalist appeals are increasingly anachronistic.[101]

As Preston emphasizes, all European countries, including Britain, are locked into regional blocs and tied by their dependence on world trade and capital flows. Moreover, as Robin Cohen has surmised, 'undiluted nationalism' will not provide a long-term palliative, particularly if the 'nation' is advanced as an *exclusive* focus of loyalty and identity. This is because, in such Western nation-states, a Pandora's box of multiple loyalties and identities - nationalist, ethnic, religious, linguistic, culture and gender based - has already been opened.[102] As will be examined in *Chapter 7*, Laclau and Mouffe observe a similar plurality of non-nationalist identifications in the contemporary and 'post-modern' Western epoch.

For a discourse-theoretical approach, the final breakdown of such myths occurs when the spatial forms of representation and the discursive structure they support are confronted with a set of undomesticated events. The presence of events that can neither by symbolized by the discursive formation or inscribed upon at the level of the imaginary, threatens the social order precisely because it threatens its ability to sustain order.[103] This is apposite in that the process of European integration has created a tension within the discursive formation of British parliamentary liberalism because it invoked an asymmetry between its articulated discourses of parliamentary sovereignty and economic liberalism. This asymmetry was the result of a conflation between the rationale of European and British economic liberalisation in response to globalisation, which, in turn, conflicts with the British rationale of national parliamentary sovereignty.

---

[101] Cohen, R. (1994) *Frontiers of Identity: The British and the Others*. (London, New York: Longman). p. 203.
[102] Ibid. p. 204.

This asymmetry produced a tension within the hegemonic neo-liberal discursive formation. The process of European integration had created inconsistencies between the moments of this discursive formation, and thus, the *contingency* of its articulated moments was revealed. Hence, the mythical status of neo-liberalism was exposed. Since it could not offer credible and internally coherent principles of intelligibility for this new situation, it could no longer provide an order for British society.

This internal inconsistency led to leadership battles, Conservative Party disputes and fierce parliamentary debates.[104] For example, it was evident in the parliamentary discussion of the European Communities (Amendment) Act (1986) and the implementation of the SEA (1986)[105], and played a pivotal role in the demise of Thatcher. The significance of this asymmetry upon the internal cohesion of the Conservative Party is also reflected in the divide it invoked between Thatcher and Powell. In contrast to Thatcher, Powell believed that the preservation of national and absolute parliamentary sovereignty was more important than the economic incentives of the completion of the Single European Market. Moreover, this tension intensified as the political implications of European integration continued to grow. The greater political consequences of the TEU led to the fiercest parliamentary debates in British post-war history, and accentuated the party splits that played a significant role in the electoral defeat of the Major Government in 1997.

---

[103] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 129-30.
[104] See: Ludlam, S. (1998) 'The Cauldron: Conservative Parliamentarians and European Integration', in: Baker, D. and D. Seawright (eds) *Britain for and Against Europe: British Politics and the Question of European Integration*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press) pp. 31-33; Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 56-7.

Moments of choice between discourses occur when existing discourses can no longer provide coherent and rational answers when challenged by such new events. Hence, it is the failure of Britain's particular hegemonic form of rationality in the face of this event that requires the reconstitution of British hegemonic discourse along different lines. Indeed, it is questionable whether national parliamentary sovereignty can provide a rational and internally coherent response to the increasing pressures of Globalisation and Europeanisation. However, the process of European integration did not only expose the mythical status of the *contingent articulation* of British economic liberalism and the British parliamentary sovereignty.

5.3. Allies and adversaries

As indicated above, throughout British history, Europe has been consistently constructed as an enemy of the nation: it has successively represented the alien and antipathetic threat of Catholicism, political revolution, republican democracy, fascism, communism, socialism, social democracy and federalism. All these ideas have been perceived as potentially disruptive to the British social order. The necessity of combating these European ideas has dictated a choice of allies for Britain, such as Protestants, monarchists, liberals, and anti-Communists. A 'special relationship' with the US was formed to combat these enemies. For example, Britain and the US have experienced mutual victories as major allies over Continental European antagonistic forces, whether in the form of nazism, fascism, or communism. Moreover, this 'special relationship' with the US, which contrasts with the British 'awkward partnership' with Continental Europe, reflects

---

[105] See: Judge, D. (1988) 'Incomplete Sovereignty: The British House of Commons and the Completion of the Internal Market in the European Communities', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 41,

that the US is 'of us' because it was colonized *by* 'us'. (In contrast, the British antagonistic relationship with Continental Europe reflects its competition with 'us' in such colonization that resulted in many conflicts that exacerbated this antagonism.) Strong linguistic and cultural similarities developed, and hence, the US became 'one of us'. Therefore, the ideas, meanings, and options of the US are equivalent to those of Britain in many respects relevant to this research focus, and have been discursively constructed as such in Britain. The consequence of the above is that, although Britain has refused to be ruled by the EU, it has shown itself to be more than willing to be subservient to the US. Moreover, as *Chapter 2* illustrated, the British 'special relationship' with the US itself has been a major obstacle to British-European integration.[106]

In economic terms, reflecting its discourse of global economic liberalism outlined in *Chapter 4*, Britain conceives other nations as 'legitimate adversaries' competing within a global capitalist market. For example, as George et al and Preston observed in *Chapter 2*, Britain wanted to include global non-European economic forces, such as Japan and the US, within the process of European economic integration.[107] Moreover, in Britain, there is a conflict between such antagonistic and adversarial relations. That is, the British Eurosceptic construction of a European conspiracy conflicts with the Europhile construction of global non-European legitimate adversaries. Indeed, the conflict between these antagonistic

---

No. 4, pp. 441-55.

[106] See also: Aldrich, R. J. (1998) 'British Intelligence and the Anglo-American "Special Relationship" during the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, Volume 24, No. 3. pp. 331-51; Anderson, P. J. and T. Weymouth (1999) *Insulting the Public? The British Press and the European Union.* (London, New York: Longman). p. 160-2; Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 11-2, 17, 21-3; George, S. (1998) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). pp. 14-5, 279-80; Hill, C. (1983) 'Britain: A Convenient Schizophrenia', in C. Hill (ed.) *National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation*. (London: Allen and Unwin). p. 26; Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 163-6, 168-9, 207.

[107] Bulmer, S. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 12-3, George, S. (1992) 'The Policy of British Governments within the European Community', in George, S. (ed.) (1992) Op. Cit. p. 32, 59-60, and Preston, P. W. (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 130-5, 196-7.

and adversarial relations is pivotal to the British debate upon European union and reflects a fundamental crisis for the British national identity. That this debate remains unresolved reflects the significant crisis that this conflict poses for Britain.

6.0. The relationship between British Euroscepticism, racism, and nationalism

This section argues that Euroscepticism is a form of racism that is intrinsically linked to the development of the myth of the British nation. Racism itself is a discursive construction that develops within the discourse of nationalism.[108] However, both racism and nationalism are mutually conditioned: nationalism is the determining condition in the production of racism, and racism is a necessary element in the constitution of nationalism.[109] Hence, an analysis of racism is significant to the study of Euroscepticism because it contributes to the constitution of nationalist discourse by producing the fictive 'ethnos' that interpellates particular individuals as members of the nation and others as intruders or enemies. Racism contributes to constructing the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy. Yet, although nationalist and racist discourses are intrinsically linked, racism is '*a supplement internal to nationalism*, always in excess of it, but always indispensable to its constitution and yet always insufficient to achieve its project'.[110]

Relevant to this discussion, Anne Marie Smith has analysed the racism of Thatcherism and the New Right.[111] For Smith, the standard accounts of

---

[108] Balibar, E. (1991a) 'Racism and Nationalism', in E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein (eds) *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. (London: Verso). pp. 37-8.
[109] Ibid. p. 48.
[110] Ibid. p. 54.
[111] Smith, A. M. (1994) Op. Cit.

Thatcherism are limited because they have focused almost exclusively on the economic policies, and have generally treated racism as if it were a minor issue within New Right discourse.[112] However, British Euroscepticism has also been marginalised in this way. Similar to racism, Euroscepticism constituted a pivotal strategic element in the attempt by Thatcherism to articulate and hegemonize its new political project in the face of profound dislocation. As for the racist assault upon black immigrants and asylum seekers, British Thatcherite Euroscepticism reflected the promise to rejuvenate the myth of the British nation by rejecting a dangerous alien supplement.

In her attempt to address the lack of attention to the race issue, Smith has extensively examined Enoch Powell's contribution to the formation of an anti-black immigration movement. However, it is also important to consider his major contribution to the formation of British Euroscepticism. Indeed, as emphasized above, Powell was central to the campaign against continued community membership by 1975 as well as to the formation of Thatcherism, and to the articulation of Euroscepticism as a major element of this discourse.

As a key proponent, the speeches of Enoch Powell articulated the myth of the British nation with the principle of parliamentary sovereignty, thus representing the discursive formation of 'British national parliamentary sovereignty'. His Euroscepticism represented a desire to preserve the institution of parliament that simultaneously reflected Britishness as well as defended it. As Powell demonstrates to a French audience:

> ... it is a fact that the British Parliament and its paramount authority occupies a position in relation to the British nation which no other

---

[112] Ibid. pp. 1-5.

> elective assembly in Europe possesses. Take parliament out of the history of England and history itself becomes meaningless. ... (T)he British nation could not imagine itself except with and through its parliament. Consequently the sovereignty of our parliament is something other for us than what your assemblies are to you.[113]

Indeed, Powell declared that the question of British membership of the EEC had to be set in the context of nationhood and thus, of 'instinct, of feeling, of passion, of prejudice even'.[114] It also had to be set in the context of the political 'fighting question' of freedom, the freedom of 'us' from 'compulsion by 'them'.[115] In sum, 'We' is the nation, and the freedom in question is 'national independence'.[116] Reflecting the articulation of parliamentary liberalism and British nationalism, Powell explains that:

> The England which expects its people to do their duty in the hour of peril is a parliamentary nation. The soul of that liberty with which its citizens associate their nationhood is the right to live under laws which are made by that Parliament and government which is consented to by that Parliament.[117]

However, he argued that external European forces were destroying such nationhood and liberty:

> ... The rights of a freeborn Englishman, which used to be secured to him by his native institutions, are no longer good enough. On pain of displeasing an outside world that lived under horrid tyrannies long after England was self-governing, we petition foreign judges on the continent to declare and enforce our rights by interpreting at their discretion a document which no English lawyer - I almost said no writer of decent English - would imagine in a nightmare.[118]

Such Euroscepticism constitutes a nodal point in British nationalist discourse. That is, Euroscepticism plays an important role in the symbolization of the communal space of the British nation, which has been constructed in relation to the perceived

---

[113] Powell, E. (1971) Op. Cit. p. 85.
[114] Ritchie, R. (ed.) (1989) Op. Cit. Extract on 'Nationhood' from a speech to a fringe meeting of Conservatives at the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool,14 October 1981. p. 126.
[115] Ibid. Extract on "We' and 'They" from a speech to a fringe meeting of Conservatives at the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool,14 October 1981. p. 125.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid. 'A Parliamentary Nation', Extract from a Speech in London, 22 April, 1986. p. 152.

threat of 'Europe, the Other'. This is evident in the similarities between the arguments of such major protagonists as Edmund Burke (as examined above in *Section 2.1.*) and Enoch Powell in their defence of British national parliament and political culture against the French Revolution and European integration respectively.[119] Indeed, the relationship between the 'Eurosceptic defenders of the British nation' and the threat of the 'anti-British European invader' has operated as a key to make intelligible the dislocation and disintegration of the British nation. Following the propositions of discourse theory examined in *Sections 1.1-2. and 5.0-1.* above, it has helped make bearable the impossibility of such a fully constituted British national identity. It obscures the impossibility of restoring something that has never been, or could ever be, complete. It will now be explained how such anti-European sentiment has played this stabilizing function for the British identity, and thus, how it was able to achieve hegemonic success.

6.1. Patria and ethnos

The 'British nation' is an empty signifier symbolizing an absent fullness; that is, it is a cultural and political community that is imagined precisely because it is not realized.[120] The homogenization and substantialization of this empty signifier of the nation is a defining feature of nationalist discourse. As illustrated above, such invokes a reduction of difference to sameness. As for previous British nationalist movements, the aim of Thatcherism was to hegemonize the empty signifier of the British nation by attaching it to a transcendental signified that could arrest the play of meaning. As such, Thatcherism tended to define the nation in terms of 'patria',

---

[118] Ibid. 'A Sub-species'. Extract from a Speech in London, 22 April, 1986. p. 153.
[119] However, in contrast to Burke, Powell required a political *revolution* in order to reintroduce British *conservatism*.
[120] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 202.

which involved a transcendental reference to a necessary relation between blood and soil. This relates to the Derridian notion of 'ontology':

> ... an axiomatics linking indissociably the ontological value of present-being [on] to its situation, to the stable and presentable determination of a locality, the topos of territory, native soil, city, body in general.[121]

This 'ontological essentialization' of the relation between being and a place is a constitutive feature of nationalism, and it can be identified within the words of Powell and Thatcher. For example, Powell explains that pro-European statements simply denote 'the British' as:

> ... those of the Community's inhabitants who live in Britain, speak English, eat fish and chips, and exhibit other non-political symptoms associated with the people of this island.[122]

The result is that they fail to acknowledge the 'true' significance of surrendering parliamentary sovereignty for European political integration:

> Never again, by the necessity of an axiom, will an Englishman live for his country or die for his country: the country for which people live and die was absolute, and we have abolished it.[123]

Such an ontological essentialization requires the additional essentialization of a being in terms of a definition of a privileged, distinctive and unified 'ethnos' that inhabits the national territory. The auto-referential interpellation of a superior race with a privileged link to the national soil is conditional upon the hetero-referential interpellation of other inferior races, which are either inside or outside the nation, or both. For example, the neo-liberal assault upon an intruding European 'super-state' that is subservient to a conspiracy of 'German warmongers' and 'French collaborators', as described below. It is such auto-referential and hetero-referential interpellations of individuals as belonging to a certain race (defined in

---

[121] Derrida, J. (1994) *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Working of Mourning, and the New International*. (New York: Routledge). p. 82.
[122] Ritchie, R. (ed.) (1989) Extract from an article in *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 June 1975. p. 146.
[123] Ibid.

either biological or cultural terms) that together constitute the defining gestures of 'racism'.[124]

Hence, the Euroscepticism of Powell and Thatcher functioned to organize British nationalist discourse around a 'fictive ethnos'. Similar to other myths and discourses, this fictive ethnos is constructed by excluding a constitutive outside that is constructed through the rearticulation of differential moments as part of a chain of equivalence. This chain of equivalence may construct different ethnic groups as belonging to an undifferentiated mass of people who are conceived as inferior because of their *biological* race, as reflected in the British Eurosceptic sentiment that 'the wogs begin at Calais'.[125] However, racism may also operate within a system of differences by associating other identities with particular essential *cultural* traits that are incompatible with the British 'ethnos'.[126]

Smith observes that British New Right racist discourse tends to underline the insurmountability of *cultural differences* more than *biological superiority*. It is also apparent that British Euroscepticism asserts such cultural differences. It seeks to defend 'our' British culture from 'them' and their 'alien' and incompatible cultures. Examples include the many scares about the European Commission interfering in our British way of life, including our traditional diet, working hours, and pass-times. However, it is also apparent that British Euroscepticism has tended to assert a fictive British *cultural superiority*. Frequently compounded by selective and inaccurate references to history, Britain is held to be intrinsically superior in political, economic, social and military terms. In particular, the perception of British superiority is often developed from of superior British war capabilities, as well as a

---

[124] Balibar, E. (1991a) Op. Cit. p. 49.

distorted memory of how Britain stood alone against evil European forces and 'won the war'. Such rhetoric was evident in the Conservative Party Conference in 1995, when the Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, offered a historical reminder of how, "twice this century we have risked everything to restore freedom to Europe".[127] Similarly, Thatcher argued that Britain's successful war efforts have demonstrated its commitment to Europe:

> We British have in a special way contributed to Europe. Over the centuries we have fought to prevent Europe falling under the dominance of a single power. We have fought and we have died for her freedom. Only a few miles from Bruges lie the bodies of 120 000 British soldiers who died in the First World War. Had it not been for their willingness to fight and die, Europe would have been united long before now - but not in liberty, not in justice.[128]

Yet it is also evident that the more radical or explicit British Euroscepticism has asserted Britain's *biological difference* and *superiority*. As demonstrated below, radical Eurosceptics argue that European integration must and will be obstructed because the British people are believed to have a different and superior 'nature'. As explained above, the interpellation of a particular race with a privileged link to the nation by a hegemonic strategy involves the construction of an antagonism, and in Britain, Continental Europe has been the object of such an antagonism. For example, as illustrated above, reflecting the construction of a populist unity, Thatcher spoke in the *intrinsic* interests of the British people whose *deepest* instincts were opposed to European integration.

In particular, radical British Eurosceptics argue that the superior 'essence' of the British people is opposed to the 'socialist' intrinsic nature of the French or the inherent 'Nazism' of the Germans. In accordance with these natural traits, these

---

[125] Sharpe, L. J. (1996) *British Scepticism and the European Union: A Guide for Foreigners*, in M. Holmes (ed.) (1996) Op. Cit. p. 309.
[126] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 203.
[127] Portillo, M. (1995) Op. Cit.

other nations have a natural instinct to take over others, to spread and invade like a disease. Once again, many of these Eurosceptic beliefs are founded on The War. It is argued that European integration represents another Continental European strategy to take over Europe - that 'Europe, the Other' is, *once again*, threatening to destroy the British nation. However, in accordance with their superior essential nature, and demonstrated by their previous war victories, it is claimed that the British people will never allow this to happen. These observations will now be substantiated.

For example, Powell illustrates that Britain's superior military mentality has developed a symbolic 'ditch' between 'us' and 'them':

> An essential element in forming a single electorate is the sense that in the last resort all parts of stand or fall, survive or perish, together. This sense the British do not share with the inhabitants of the continent of Western Europe. Of all the nations of Europe Britain and Russia alone, though for opposite reasons, have this in common: they can be defeated in the decisive land battle and still survive. This characteristic ... Britain owes to its ditch. The British feel and I believe that instinct corresponds with sound military reason - that the ditch is as significant [today and as it was] in the Grand Armée of Napoleon ... Error or truth, myth or reality, the belief itself is a habit of mind which has helped to form the national identity of the British and cannot be divorced from it.

Radical British Euroscepticism often demonstrates a more explicit racist and xenophobic tendency in its references to 'The War'. Revisiting the opening quotation of this thesis, Patrick Nicholls declares:

> In short, I have no great liking for a Continent dominated by two countries, the unique contribution of one of which has been to plunge Europe into two world wars in living memory, and another which proved itself incapable of winning any war unless it is fought by the French Foreign Legion ... (and which) ... had the nerve to represent itself as a nation of resistance fighters in the second World War when, in fact, it was a nation of collaborators'.[129]

---

[128] Thatcher, M. (1988) Op. Cit. In: M. Holmes (ed.) (1996) Op. Cit. p. 89.
[129] Nicholls, P. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 4.

Thus, Nicholls continues to equate Germany with 'Nazism' and perceives them as 'warmongers' with a threatening inherently desire for war itself[130], whilst the French cannot be trusted as they are 'Nazi collaborators'. Similarly, with regard to the threat posed to British sovereignty by European integration, Nicholas Ridley argued that 'You might just as well give it up to Adolf Hitler'.[131] Indeed, he was uncertain whether the German Chancellor, Helmot Khol, was preferable to Hitler:

> I'm not sure that I wouldn't rather have the shelters and the chance to fight back, than simply being taken over by ... *economics*. He'll soon be coming *here*, and trying to say that this is what we should do on the banking front and this is what our taxes should be. I mean, he'll soon be trying to take over *everything*.[132]

Dominic Lawson suggests that Ridley's confidence in expressing such xenophobic opinions might reflect his previous enthusiastic support for Enoch Powell.[133] He also suggests that it might be owed to Ridley's knowledge that similar views were held by Thatcher. Lawson recalls an incident when one of Thatcher's former advisors arrived for a meeting in a German car:

> What is that *foreign* car? She gowered.
> Its a Volkswagen, he replied ...
> Don't *ever* park something like that her again.[134]

Similar to Thatcher, Ridley argues that his views represent the British people, and he also claims that European monetary union could invoke a 'bloody revolution' in Britain:

> You can't change the British people for the better by saying 'Herr Pöhl[135] says you can't do that'. They'd say, 'You know what you can do with your bloody Herr Pöhl'. I mean, you don't understand the British people if you don't understand this point about them. They can be

---

[130] Of course, such a perception is ironic when we examine the post-war period and observe that Britain has supported more wars than the rest of Europe. Indeed, such reflects the British special relationship with the US and its awkward partnership with the EU, as examined above.
[131] Lawson, D. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 8.
[132] Ibid. pp. 8-9.
[133] For example, he voted for Powell in the Conservative leadership contest in 1965.
[134] Lawson, D. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 9.
[135] At this time, Herr Pöhl, the president of the Budesbank, was visiting England to promote European monetary policy.

> dared; they can be moved. But being bossed by a German - it would cause absolute mayhem in this country, and rightly, I think.[136]

Of course, it is ironic that such *racist* and *xenophobic* perceptions of Germany are based upon the previous threat of *Nazism*!

Other British Eurosceptic interpretations of the war have led to a perception of the French and Belgians as untrustworthy. For example, on the subject of European defence policy, the MP for Welwyn and Hatfield, David Evans, said, 'I don't trust the French and Belgians to be there when it matters. Twice this century they haven't been there'.[137] Similarly, the Italians have been portrayed as cowards.[138] Although it is no longer viewed to be 'politically correct' to be racist in many of its other forms, such anti-European sentiment still remains publicly acceptable in Britain. Similar to racism, the more extreme forms of Euroscepticism are more publicly espoused in jokes, football chants[139], and the British press[140], including references to 'Frogs', 'Krauts', 'Spics', and 'Wops'. For example, an extract from *The Daily Express* argues that, ' ... the British bulldog isn't going to be dictated to by the Froggies or any other foreigners ...'.[141]

All forms of racism and Euroscepticism involve the 'stigmatization of otherness'. This inscribes itself in social practices of elimination, violence, intolerance, humiliation, discrimination, and so forth. It also inscribes itself in 'fantasmatic

---

[136] Lawson, D. (1990) Op. Cit. p. 9.
[137] Webster, P. and J. Bale (1997) *The Times*, 6 March. p. 2.
[138] For example, the old British joke: 'Did you hear about the new Italian car? It has one forward gear and four to reverse'.
[139] See: Levermore, R. (2001) *Sport and Identity in International Relations: The 1998 World Cup*. Plymouth International Papers; PIP No. 17. (Plymouth International Studies Centre, University of Plymouth).
[140] See: Anderson, P. J. and A. Weymouth (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 60-92. See also: Wilkes, G. and D. Wring (1998) 'The British Press and European Integration: 1948 to 1996', in D. Baker and D. Seawright (eds) Op. Cit. pp. 185-205.
[141] Wheatcroft, G. (1997) 'Two Parties Splash Each Other with Mud from the Same Road', *The Daily Express*, 15 April, p. 10.

representations'[142] that invoke the need to purify the social body, to preserve its identity, to protect it from all forms of invasion.[143] Such fantasmatic representations might spontaneously develop as part of racist practices or they may result from theoretical doctrines that organize them, such as with the hegemonic project of Thatcherism described above. The significance of such doctrines is that they provide the 'interpretative keys not only to what individuals are *experiencing* but also to what they *are* in the social world'.[144] The strength of these discourses are their mythical function: in the face of dislocation, they provide a reading principle that allows the British to make sense of an impossible, divided and chaotic world and to assess their own role in its reorganization.[145] That is, they help reconcile the impossibility of a fully constituted British identity. Moreover, as these myths successfully became social imaginaries, they came to provide the ultimate horizon of meaning and action in Britain. They became the only 'true' reading principles able to reveal the secret of the social order and the enemies that conspired to deprive its fullness.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified the following interrelated insights into Britain's obstruction to the process of European integration. First, the British antagonism with Continental Europe has invoked the conflict in hegemonic discourse that was observed in *Chapter 4*. In turn, this divergence in discourse has produced new antagonisms. This conclusion was informed by applying the discourse-theoretical

---

[142] See: *Chapter 3, Section 5.4;* Torfing, J. (199) Op. Cit. pp. 116-8; Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. pp. 32-3, 126-7, and Žižek, S. (1990) 'East European's Republic of Gilead', *New Left Review*, Volume 183, September-October, pp. 50-62.
[143] Balibar, E. (1991b) 'Is there a 'Neo-Racism'?', in E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein (eds) Op. Cit. pp. 17-8.
[144] Ibid. p. 19.
[145] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 203.

conception of social antagonism and the constitutive outside. In accordance with this conception, it was argued that the British antagonism with Continental Europe has unified and sustained the British discursive system of identity. That is, the construction of British identity has involved the construction of a social antagonism with Continental Europe. The problem for British-European integration is that the limits of the British discursive system of identity are established in terms of the exclusion of Continental Europe as its constitutive outside. Thus, Britain has obstructed the process of European integration because it represents the threat of its radical otherness.

It was also argued that the British antagonism with Continental Europe - and hence, with the EU - is a discursive *response* to dislocation. As illustrated above, the exclusion and negation of Continental European alternative meanings and options, and the people who identify with them, has helped constitute and sustain the British identity. Hence, as the EU is identified as a Continental European entity, it has also served to stabilize the British identity in this way.

As well as providing this stabilizing function, it was also emphasized that this antagonism has been a major *source* of dislocation for Britain. It was illustrated that Continental Europe became the constitutive outside for the British identity because it was detected as an external *cause* of dislocation. The British identity has been dislocated by the threat posed by 'Europe, the Other' and its alien ideas. Hence, European integration represents the growing threat to order and stability posed by this external antagonistic and potentially dislocating force that represents ‘anti-Britain’. In addition, whether they were 'true' the cause or not, it is evident that Continental European ideas, interests and projects - and thus, the EU

- have been negated by successive British hegemonic projects because they have been identified as an external cause of dislocation. In contrast, hegemonic strategies have presented their ideas, interests and projects as inherently 'British', and thus, as the only credible alternative to these 'alien' and negated elements.

Following these insights, it can be concluded that the British antagonism with Europe is double-edged because it has constituted and sustained the British identity, but only by positing a threat to it. Hence, there seems to be an 'oscillation' between dislocation and social antagonism: the British antagonism with Europe is a discursive response to a dislocation, but this dislocation was also caused by an antagonism with Europe. Furthermore, subsequent dislocations renewed this antagonism and vice versa. However, following the principles of a discourse theory, it must be emphasized that a dislocation may not necessarily be responded to by the construction of a social antagonism in this way, that is, by the detection of a cause of the dislocation that can serve as an enemy.[146] Indeed, history is plagued with examples of hegemonic agents identifying 'false' causes of dislocation to suit their own ends and to divert attention away from themselves as a 'true' cause. Appropriate scapegoats that suit the political and economic goals of the hegemonic project or that reflect, or prey upon, traditional and irrational fears of the Other are identified or selected. All these observations relate to the phenomenon of British Eurosceptics, and it is precisely because Continental Europe was detected as a 'true' cause of dislocation in the past that has made it a primary source of dislocation today, as well as a convenient scapegoat for it. Thus, in sum, this analysis suggests that there is a complex non-linear, oscillating inter-relationship between dislocation, social antagonism and discourse.

With regard to the development of the British antagonism with Europe, this chapter examined the myths that have been important articulated moments of the British discursive system of national identity. These myths became articulated moments of the discursive formation of 'British national parliamentary liberalism'. These articulated myths were examined because they have played a crucial role in the development of British Euroscepticism. For example, the myths of the British nation and (neo-) parliamentary liberalism have informed the defence of national and parliamentary sovereignty (respectively) against European integration. The process of European integration was negated as a moment of a chain of equivalence that represented 'social democracy', and thus, 'anti-parliamentary liberalism'. As such, it was identified as a source of dislocation. Moreover, with regard to the development of the myth of the British nation, Continental Europe itself has been discursively constructed as a cause of dislocation, and thus, as an enemy of the British nation.

In relation to the development of the myth of the British nation, one aspect of British Euroscepticism that is often overlooked is its intrinsic relationship with xenophobia and racism. Congruent with the psychoanalytical insights into racism, British Euroscepticism also represents a pathological and 'irrational' fear of the Other, as mentioned above. As this chapter has illustrated, hegemonic agents have played upon this irrational fear in their attempt to achieve popular consent for 'British parliamentary liberalism' and to fend off popular demands for the more democratic discourses of the Continent (that are constructed as an alien threat to the order and stability of the British nation).

Yet the growing pressures of globalisation and Europeanisation may undermine these 'nationcentric' myths. They may no longer be able to provide a credible discourse in the face of these great external forces. Similarly, as Cohen suggests, the myth of the British nation may not be able to provide a credible discourse in the face of the growing multiplicity of loyalties and identities. As illustrated in the following chapter, Laclau and Mouffe observe a similar plurality of identifications in the post-modern Western world. Indeed, we now move on to this final chapter which will apply a discourse-theoretical approach to the problem of overcoming the conflict between the plurality of national identities that have obstructed the development of a universal and supranational European identity.

Part III

Towards a New European Identity

Chapter 6

The Universal, the Particular, and the Question of a European Identity

Introduction

This thesis has shown that European (political) integration has been obstructed by a divergence in (hegemonic political and governmental) discourse between Britain and Continental Europe. Moreover, it was argued that the possibility of developing a universal European identity is made even more problematic because British identity was actually constructed in opposition to Continental Europe as its threatening radical other. Therefore, this chapter will examine whether a discourse-theoretical approach holds the key to resolving this conflict between British and Continental European identities that has obstructed the development of a universal European identity. As represented by the tension between supranationalism (as advanced by neo-functionalism) and intergovernmentalism (as advanced by neo-realism and domestic politics approaches), this chapter observes that the question of European integration reflects the problem posed by the conceptual dyad of the universal and the particular. The pivotal question addressed by this chapter is how to consider the plurality of *particular* identities but also develop a common destiny with *universal* meanings and values.

From another perspective, the dilemma posed by the universal and the particular

is also significant because it reflects the problem that the *particularities* of member states have undermined the *universal* assumptions of *either* intergovernmentalism or supranationalism. As this thesis has demonstrated, British discourse supports the universal assumptions of neo-realism, but the national discursive particularities of Continental Europe tend to support the universal assumptions of neo-functionalism, and thus, the claims to universality of both theories are undermined.

This chapter also shows that there are significant problems specific to the discourse of modernity that have obstructed the development of a universal and democratic European identity. The limitations of the project of modernity have been reflected in theory and practice in relation to European integration, and thus, they have been part of the problem rather than the solution. Hence, this chapter will explore other discourses in pursuit of a more democratic and universal European identity, and a Europe that is finally free from the threat of totalitarianism. However, before we begin this analysis, it is first necessary to outline the identity and democratic deficits that the modernist approach has failed to resolve and that *Part III* of this thesis seeks to address.

1.0. The identity deficit

EC/EU initiatives have not led to the development of a shared collective European identity. The absence of such an identity is the most serious obstacle to the development of political legitimacy at the European level. Here, there are two ways in which European governance may be considered to be illegitimate. First, it may be considered that decisions are taken in the right political unit but by an illegitimate procedure, and second, it may be considered that decisions have been

taken by an acceptable procedure but in a collectivity that has no right to expect cooperation.[1] As expressed by British Euroscepticism, where people do not feel a part of the unit in question, its acts may be experienced as an outrageous interference, rather than as a pleasing exercise in self-governance by a well-defined community.

In the case of the liberal democratic discourse of Continental Europe, there is a peculiarly intimate link between the legitimacy of the unit and that of the political process. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau affirmed, the principle of popular sovereignty presupposes that the question of who constitutes the people has been settled by mutual agreement.[2] In addition, the procedures of democratic decision-making, especially that of majority decision, require enough trust between people for them to accept that being outvoted does not constitute a threat to their identity or interests. At the level of the state, and since the rise of modernity, it has been nationhood that has provided the sense of common identity and mutual trust necessary for these procedures to work. Thus, the question is whether there can be an equivalent sense of identity at the European level.

Most commentators agree that the existing sense of European identity is embryonic at best among the peoples of Europe. The European level lacks many of the elements which typically form the concept of nationhood - such as a common language, shared customs, or a common historical experience - on the basis of which the consciousness of a distinctive identity can be constructed.[3]An important distinction between the contending schools of thought that dominate the

---

[1] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) *Legitimacy and the European Union*. (London, New York: Longman). p. 27.
[2] See: Rousseau, J-J. (1963) [1762] *The Social Contract and Discourses*. (London: Dent). p. 173.
[3] See: Smith, A. D. (1992) 'National identity and the idea of European unity', *International Affairs*, Volume 68, No. 1, pp. 55-76.

study of European integration (supranationalism/neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism /realism) is to be found in the different assumptions that they make in relation to the possibility and validity of European identity formation.

Neo-functionalists have proposed that a European identity will develop incrementally and interactively from the 'top-down'. European integration will be cumulative from one policy area to another, and correspondingly, transnational political identities will spill-over from one elite to another before embracing a wider public. European integration will be a process in which organised 'political actors' will be gradually persuaded to shift their 'loyalties and expectations' towards a new centre.[4] By contrast, intergovernmentalists have argued that patterns of international co-operation will adapt to obstinately national patterns of identity, rather than the other way round.[5] However, both schools of thought seem to agree that out of three dimensions of legitimacy - identity, democracy and performance - the first is likely to be the weakest link for the EU.[6] It is the aim of this chapter to identify solutions to this weakest link.

2.0. The democratic deficit

In May 1991, the vice president of the European Parliament (EP), David Martin, emphasized that if the European Community was a state and it applied to join the EC, it would be turned down on the grounds that it was not a democracy.[7] This observation highlights the so-called 'democratic deficit' of EC/EU institutions that

---

[4] Haas, E.B. (1958) *The Uniting of Europe*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press). pp. 12-13.
[5] See: Hoffman, S. (1966) 'Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe'. *Daedalus*, Volume 95, pp. 862-915. See also: Tranholm-Mikkelsen, J. (1991) 'Neo-functionalism: Obstinate or Obsolete? A Reappraisal in the Light of the New Dynamism of the EC', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Volume 20, Part 1, p. 8.
[6] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) Op. Cit. p. 27.

had become increasingly noticeable since the mid-1980s.[8] In a narrow sense, the democratic deficit is the gap between the power of the Commission, the Council of Ministers, and the European Council on the one hand, and that of the national parliaments and the EP on the other.[9] In part, it results from the transfer of powers from member states to the EC. Before this transfer, national parliaments held the power to pass laws, but at the EC level, the same powers are often held by institutions other than the EP. As the EC acquired greater competence, national parliaments relinquished power not to the EP but to the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, and the European Council, all of which have considerable legislative and executive power.

Thus, national parliaments lost legislative authority and sovereignty because the EC acquired new competences. In addition, in the early 1980s, legislative authority was lost because the Council of Ministers gradually abandoned unanimity in favour of QMV. The decline of unanimity also meant the decline of national parliament control over their governments: as long as a government could veto EC legislation, its national parliament could hold it accountable for exercising - or failing to exercise - that veto. However, once governments subscribed to QMV, national parliaments could no longer hold them responsible for being outvoted and accepting the majority decision.[10] Paradoxically, although QMV is inherently democratic, it has deepened the democratic deficit if viewed from the perspective of individual member states rather that the EC as a policy-making body and collective entity.

---

[7] David Martin's remarks at the European Community Studies Association's Second International Conference, George Mason University, 27 May, 1991. As cited in Dinan, D. (1994) *Ever Closer Union?* (London: Macmillan). p. 288.
[8] Williams, S. (1991) 'Sovereignty and Accountability in the European Community', in R.O. Keohane and S. Hoffman (eds) *The New Community: Decision-making and Institutional Change*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview). pp. 155, 162.
[9] Dinan, D. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 288.
[10] Ibid. p. 289.

The democratic deficit refers to the comparative weakness of the EP in relation to the Council of Ministers and the failure of national parliaments to become more involved in Community affairs. In addition, it concerns 'the absence of a genuine European political culture and discussion of key political matters outside of elite circles'.[11] It has been observed that 'the shortcomings of the Community lie in the feelings of remoteness and lack of influence and involvement on the part of many citizens'.[12] Indeed, in Denmark and France in particular, public disquiet over the elitism and obscurity of Community decision-making, rather than over the relative impotence of the EP and national parliaments in Community affairs, burst into open during the Maastricht Treaty ratification crisis in 1992. The governments of Denmark and France learned a costly lesson from this crisis: as the Community encroaches more and more on people's daily lives and the distinction between domestic affairs and Community affairs disappears, the public wants greater openness and involvement in Community decision-making.[13] Moreover, exposed problems of fraud in the EP have further undermined its legitimacy and increased concern.[14]

The democratic deficit cannot be rectified by simply giving more power to the EP. David Martin's analogy notwithstanding, the EU is not a state, and its institutional framework and political system will never correspond to that of a classic liberal democracy. Similarly, the Commission will never acquire the characteristics of a

---

[11] Meunier-Aitsahalia, S. and G. Ross (1993) 'Democratic Deficit or Democratic Surplus: A Reply to Andrew Moravcsik's Comments about the French Referendum', *French Politics and Society*, Volume 11, No. 1, Winter. p. 63.
[12] Bogdanor, V. and G. Woodcock (1991) 'The European Community and Sovereignty', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 44, No. 1, October. p. 492.
[13] Dinan, D. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 291.
[14] See: Middelhoek, A. (1999) 'First Report on Allegations regarding Fraud, Mismanagement and Nepotism in the European Commission', 15 March. (Luxembourg: European Parliament; MacMullen, A. (1999) 'Fraud, Mismanagement and Nepotism: The Committee of Independent Experts and the Fall of the European Commission', *Crime, Law and Social Change*, Volume 31, No. 3, pp. 193-208.

national executive.[15] However, the legitimacy of the decision-making authority of the EU can be analysed through the democratic criteria of accountability, authorisation and representation.[16] As will now be illustrated, the authority of EU institutions can be observed to be deficient in each of these aspects of democratic legitimacy.

First, the individual accountability of Council Ministers to their domestic parliaments is, at best, tenuous.[17] Their accountability to their national parliaments is hindered by the traditions of foreign office secrecy, by the log-rolling procedures of decision making in the Council of Ministers, and by its increasing use of majority voting.[18] Moreover, the collective accountability of either the European Commission or the Council of Ministers directly to the EP is limited by the restrictions on the powers of scrutiny, amendment and approval of the latter.[19] Second, members of both the Commission and the Council are not popularly authorised. Commission members are appointed by national governments, and although Council Ministers may be popularly elected, they are elected by national electorates to fulfil an explicitly national rather than a European function.[20] Finally, there are a number of different issues that relate to democratic representation and participation. One issue is that European elections have remained 'second-order' since their inception in 1979. That is, voters rank the national arena as more important than the European level; they use European elections to express

---

[15] Dinan, D. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 292.
[16] See: Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) Op. Cit. pp. 26-29.
[17] Ibid. p. 27.
[18] Weiler, J. H. H. (1992) 'After Maastricht: Community Legitimacy in Post-1992 Europe', in: W. J. Adams (ed.) *Singular Europe: Economy and Polity of the European Community after 1992.* (Ann Arbor, MF: University of Michigan Press). p. 14.
[19] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) Op. Cit. p. 27.
[20] Ibid. p. 26, 63. See also: Hallstein, W. (1970) *L'Europe Inachevée.* (Paris: Robert Laffont). p. 77.)

preferences about domestic politics rather than the EU, and they turn out in lower numbers than for national elections.[21]

As this second-order problem demonstrates, the EU has failed to encourage the active participation of a European electorate.[22] Although turnout to European elections has varied greatly between member states, it has steadily declined from 62.5 % in 1979 to only 49% in 1999.[23] As Paul Magnette observes, the apathetic category of civic participation is much larger at the European level.[24] However, this apathy cannot be simply resolved by assigning political powers to particular EU institutions. For example, it can be observed that voter participation has fallen in all of the five European elections since 1979, even though the powers of the EP have increased considerably in this period[25], including, in 1994, the new right to confirm the Commission in office.[26]

Various other reasons can be given for this apathy. For example, European barometer polls frequently indicate that a significant number of citizens do not feel informed about European issues and do not understand its political system.[27] Also, the highly complex institutional system of the EU does not reflect the democratic mechanisms of participation and accountability with which its citizens

---

[21] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) Op. Cit. p. 27, 78; Held, D. (1996) *Models of Democracy*. (Cambridge: Polity). pp. 115-8.
[22] Magnette, P. (2003) 'European Governance and Civic Participation: Beyond Elitist Citizenship?', *Political Studies*, Volume 51, No. 1, p. 148. See also: Hix, S. (1999) *The Political System of the European Union*. (London: Macmillan).
[23] See: Jones, R. A. (2001) *The Politics and Economics of the European Union*. Second Edition. (Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, Massachusetts). pp. 138-9; Jacobs, F., R. Corbett, and M. Shackleton (1995) *The European Parliament*. Third Edition. (London: Catermill). pp. 25-30. Turnout was 59% in 1984, 57.2% in 1989, and 56.4% in 1994. Between 1994 and 1999, turnout decreased in nine out of the twelve countries that participated, including Britain. See: Jones, R. A. (2001) Op. Cit. pp. 138-9.
[24] Magnette, P. (2003) Op. Cit. p. 148.
[25] The SEA, the TEU, and the Treaty of Amsterdam (ToA) (1997) have all increased the powers of the EP. (See: Jones, R. A. (2001) Op. Cit. p. 138.)
[26] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) Op. Cit. p. 78. See also: Jones, R. A. (2001) Op. Cit. p. 138.
[27] Magnette. P. (2003). Op Cit. p. 148. See also: Hix, S. (1999). Op. Cit.

are familiar.[28] Moreover, although the EP has been elected by universal suffrage since 1979, the Council of Ministers and the European Council are not affected by European elections, and the composition of the Commission is only slightly dependent upon the results of these transnational elections.[29] In sum, electoral participation is dampened by the knowledge that these elections do not amount to 'throw the scoundrels out'.[30]

Moreover, as indicated above, there is not a sufficient sense of common identity amongst the people of Europe for elections to bear the weight expected of them. The divisiveness of competitive electoral politics is only sustainable on the basis of a more fundamental unity, such as agreement on political nationhood typically provides at the level of member states. As David Beetham and Christopher Lord argue:

> Once issues of political identity are themselves brought into play in electoral politics, and become a major source of electoral division, then democracy becomes unsustainable, since electoral minorities lack the necessary trust in the majority that their vital interests will be protected.[31]

This suggests that any further democratisation of the EU cannot move beyond the development of a stronger sense of common identity and a fuller acceptance of the appropriateness of the European level of governance.[32] The construction of a European identity is crucial to establishing the trust between the people of Europe that is necessary for democratic procedures to work. To develop this trust, the EU must develop an identity based upon citizenship and the guarantee of shared basic rights that would be immune from erosion by contingent majorities. To the

---

[28] Ibid. p. 144.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Weiler, J. H. H. (1999) 'To be a European Citizen: Eros and Civilisation', in: *The Constitution of Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). p. 329.
[31] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) Op. Cit. p. 28.
[32] Weiler, J. H. H. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 22.

extent that shared civic rights are part of the solution, identity construction will require democratization of the EU, and vice versa.[33]

As will now be argued, solutions to the identity and democratic deficits of the EU have been hindered because both theory and practice have reflected the limitations of the discourse of modernity of which they are part. The possibility of a more democratic identity will be examined in *Chapter 7.*

3.0. The limitations of modernity

Similar to Preston et al, this thesis has argued that Continental European hegemonic discourse is more amenable to supranational integration and the development of a democratic European union than the discourse that has prevailed in Britain. However, in contrast to Preston et al, this thesis also emphasizes that Continental European discourse should not be advanced as an ideal. As will now be argued, with regard to the development of a European identity, both theory and practice have been limited because they are all moments of the discourse of modernity, and thus, reflect the limitations of this project. As such, they tend to be part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Moreover, with specific regard to theory, orthodox modernist analyses are part of the problem because they tend to reinforce the differences between discursive systems of identity - and thus, the antagonisms between them - by upholding a particular one as an ideal.

---

[33] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) Op. Cit. p. 58.

3.1. Modernity and essentialism

There has been a growing awareness of the limits of project of modernity. First, it has been radicalized as the contingency of its meta-narratives and grand narratives have been exposed.[34]Here, the foundational drives of modernity that have aimed to ground our knowledge and values on an objective and essential foundation have been deconstructed. That is, there has been a questioning of the modernist assumption of underlying and totalizing narratives that ensure the objectivity or truth of our knowledge. It is no longer readily accepted that these narratives can provide a privileged insight into the 'true' conditions of our being in the world.

Second, the universality and claims to truth of these narratives have been questioned as we have begun to accept the credibility of others. Hence, although modernity has presented itself as a final and universal truth about the human condition, it is has become increasing exposed as simply one among other credible alternatives. As addressed below with regard to the problem of 'Eurocentrism', the hegemony of the narratives of modernity led to 'ethnocentric' perceptions of the world.[35]

Third, it is becoming increasingly recognized that the category of 'the Subject' cannot provide an ultimate or objective starting point for theoretical analysis, since it is constructed in and through hegemonic strategies taking place within an undecidable discursive terrain. Subjectivity is no longer conceived as a unified and

---

[34] Lyotard, J. F. (1984) [1979] *The Postmodern Condition: A Report of Knowledge*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press). p. 75.
[35] On the problem of ethnocentrism, see for example: Said, E. W. (1978) *Orientalism*. (New York: Pantheon); Young, R. J. C. (1996*) Torn Halves: Political Conflict in Literary and Cultural Theory*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press), and Young, R. J. C. (1990) *White Mythologies: Writing*

self-conscious starting point for the construction of social life, but revealed as a divided and overdetermined subjectivity constructed by such unmasterable strategies.

Fourth, reason cannot provide such an ultimate or objective starting point for precisely the same reasons. Rationality fails to provide an ultimate ground for ethico-political judgement and historical development because it is itself inflicted with aporias that cannot be resolved on logical grounds.[36] Thus, although it remains a marginal position, it is becoming increasingly accepted that knowledge rests upon communal rules and values, and therefore, that it must renounce all pretence to universality.[37]

Fifth, modernity has become fissured because the main features of modern societies have become increasingly ambiguous. There has been a growing recognition of the ambiguity of the constitutive traits of modern Western society. Recent developments have challenged modernist assumptions of the tendency towards a separation of state and civil society, an ever-deepening social division of labour, and the formation of nation-states. For example, as Preston argues, the traditional sovereignty of European nation-states is being undermined by the processes of regionalization, internationalization, and globalization. Similarly, as illustrated in *Chapter 7*, Laclau and Mouffe observe a complex plurality of

---

History and the West. (London: Routledge).

[36] For example, Kurt Gödel's proof showed the impossibility of the self-grounding of any logical system. See: Gödel, K. (1931) 'Über Formal Unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und Verwandter Systeme I', *Monatshefte für Mathematik und Physik*, Volume 38, pp. 173-98; Nagel, E. and J. R. Newman (1959) [1958] *Gödel's Proof.* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

[37] For example, Kuhn's notion of scientific paradigms emphasizes the rules and values that govern the research activities of a scientific community. See: Kuhn, T. (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

identities that do not represent the simple national and class divisions that have been traditionally inscribed by the narratives of modernity.[38]

Indeed, the fundamental values and essential identities of modernity are not able to conceive the politics of identity flourishing in the contemporary western world. The complex plurality of identities, conflicts, struggles and social movements are not grounded in any single transcendent or underlying positive ground, and thus, they cannot be made intelligible by a single essential principle such as 'the nation' or 'class'. For example, there exists a plurality of identities in the EU that traverse the national and class divisions. Moreover, by obstructing this plurality of identities and interests, these fundamental values and essentialist identities limit liberal democratic development and are potentially totalitarian.

For example, a crucial problem for the development of a progressive European identity is the tradition of nationalism that has been an essential moment of the discourse of modernity. The nation, conceived as a community that is both limited and sovereign, has been the predominant way of imagining the cultural and political community of modern societies.[39] The drive to the modern world had led to the political form of the sovereign state (a bounded juridical unit competitively interacting with other such units) which in turn brought a mobilized population. That is, the shift from politically decentralized feudalism to industrial capitalism required states, which in turn required nations. Hence, in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, the people of Continental Europe came to inhabit real and cognitive worlds of interacting bounded nation states, each with its nationalism.

---

[38] See, for example: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. (London: Verso). pp. 159-71.

As indicated in *Chapter 5,* modernist theory has traditionally viewed the nation and nationalism as either a functional response to the structures of modern society or as a natural form of human belonging. Both Marxism and liberalism have conceived them as the ideological cement of the nation-state, whilst other theories have perceived them as a basic form of human association and sentiment, which determine the contents of modernity.

Yet paradoxically, both liberal and Marxist theory have also argued that nationalism is antithetic to the discourse of modernity. Modernity, with its emphasis upon enlightened reasoning and the universal right to human equality, was supposed to eradicate this irrational and excessive ideological phenomenon. However, modernity has failed in this respect. Nationalist discourses have continued to play a crucial role in providing the myths and social imaginaries that have organized and guided the project of modernity. As such, they have represented a significant obstacle to supranational European integration. This dilemma should not be seen as an exceptional development, an unfortunate anomaly, or an unenlightened residue. Rather, it must be recognised that this problem remains unresolved because nationalism is an essential moment of modernity and its conception of democracy.

Modernity has also failed in the sense that the liberal democratic values of 'freedom and equality for all' have not swept the world. Even where liberal democracy has prevailed, it has been restricted to the public sphere of the political system and has suffered from a lack of active political involvement, and it has been further undermined by growing social and economic inequalities. Similarly, in contrast to the stages of economic development stipulated by the historical and

---

[39] See: Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origins and Spread of*

dialectical materialism of orthodox Marxism, it is apparent that international socialism has not triumphed over national capitalism.

Moreover, rather than liberal democracy or socialism, the foundational drives of modernity have frequently led to totalitarianism or authoritarianism. For example, as Tassin[40] argues below, totalitarianism in Europe has developed as a consequence of the nationalist basis of modernist discourse. Moreover, Tassin also proposes that this nationalist foundation has obstructed the development of a supranational European identity.

Thus, in relation to the development of a new European identity, the Continental European modernist project should not be upheld as an ideal because it is limited by its capitalist and nationalist objectives. Capitalism, nationalism and democracy are intrinsically linked within the modernist project, and thus, the problems posed by capitalist and nationalist conceptions of European union and democracy are perpetuated and non-capitalist and non-nationalist possibilities are obstructed. However, in relation to European integration, both theory and practice have inevitably upheld these objectives because they have either been moments of the discourse of modernity or they have presented the Continental European modernist project as an ideal that must be embraced by Britain.

In sum, there has been an increasing awareness of the limits of modernity as a blueprint for the necessary development of all societies; as a privileged insight into our true conditions of being; as a subjectivistic and rationalistic grounding of the world, and as a relevant and progressive project for the postmodern world. Hence,

---

Nationalism. (London: Verso).

[40] Tassin, E. (1992) 'Europe: A Political Community?', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. (London: Verso). pp. 169-92.

what is questioned is the status of modernity as a fundamental ontology that can provide an ultimate ground for making intelligible a world of objective social essences. Moreover, the very possibility of such a fundamental ontology is being abandoned. Postmodern theorists claim that there are no objective standpoints that guarantee absolute or universal truths or knowledge, and it is argued that the philosophical projects from Plato to Habermas have all failed in this pursuit.[41] If such a standpoint does not exist, such projects can be considered to be misguided, and thus, ineffectual.

In addition, these philosophical explorations for ultimate foundations have been criticized for constructing a false division between thought and reality, and thus, for being pointlessly preoccupied with ensuring a correspondence between them. For example, as illustrated below, Etienne Tassin explores a Platonic and universal theory of 'the European mind' to identify solutions to the contemporary problem of developing a European political community. However, such an exploration can be considered as misguided because it attempts to 'externalize' the historically specific phenomenon of European integration. This denies the historicity and fluidity of our knowledge and beliefs, and assumes that we can step outside 'reality' and achieve a completely detached, objective and universal understanding of social practices.

Such limitations have made it increasingly difficult to address the problem of European integration from within a modern theoretical perspective. Thus, this chapter aims to identify more credible alternative narratives in the pursuit of a new and democratic European identity.

---

[41] See: Rorty, R. (1980) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Knowledge*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

3.2. Modernity and Eurocentrism

Related to the limitations of modernity examined above, the theory and practice of European integration has also tended to be Eurocentric.[42] The modernist claim to universal and absolute truths has tended to obliterate other credible alternative narratives, and thus, has inhibited diversity, tolerance, and radical change. The hegemonic narratives of Western European modernity have advanced its values, such as capitalism and nationalism, as the only credible foundations for human progress and development.

For instance, many previous approaches to British-European integration can be described as Eurocentric in the sense that they have advanced the Continental European project of modernity as an ideal. As Preston acknowledges about his own analysis:

> ... the ethic affirmed in the essay is informed by the modernist project of the rational pursuit of formal and substantive democracy, and in discussing the situation of the UK the critical referent is an ideal-type compounded of this notion of democracy plus the practical example of northwestern European social-democracy.[43]

Moreover, Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn have been criticized for relentlessly denigrating British culture in the light of a largely unacknowledged 'ideal-typical' characterisation of the French Revolution.[44] Ellen Meiskins-Wood has also argued that historical reflection of such matters is frequently shaped by the 'bourgeois

---

[42] The term 'Eurocentrism' describes the beliefs that postulate past or present superiority of Europe over the rest (and over minority people of non-European descent). (Blaut, J. M. (1993) *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*. (London, New York: Guildford Press).) As Samir Amin explains, this term was established to assemble 'European ethnocentrism' into one word. (See: Amin, S. (1988) *Eurocentrism*. (New York: Monthly Review Press). However, it is conceived as more of a species of ethnocentrism by many commentators. (See, for example: Amin, S. (1988) Op. Cit., Blaut, J. M. (1993) Op. Cit.)

[43] Preston, P. W. (1994) *Europe, Democracy and the Dissolution of Britain: An Essay on the Issue of Europe in UK Public Discourse*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth). p. 5.

[44] Nairn, T. (1988) *The Enchanted Glass*. (London: Hutchison Radius). pp. 378-81.

paradigm' that acts to read the 'French experience' into that of everyone else.[45] Similarly, Colin Mooers describes a 'normative theory of bourgeois revolution'[46] that affirms a shift from traditional to modern ordered by the conflict of aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Meiskins-wood holds that Anderson and Nairn use this bourgeois paradigm to argue that British capitalism is an 'early variant' and is now both deformed and stuck in terms of development. As illustrated in *Chapter 2*, the account by Preston is largely derived from the work of Anderson and Nairn, and thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that it also employs this ideal-typical model of modernism. As explained above with regard to the critique of the meta-narratives of modernity, this paradigm represents the modernist recourse to some predetermined, teleological and totalising foundation of historical development, as with the orthodox Marxist proposition that history will necessarily progress in particular successive stages towards a final utopian stage of objectivity and truth represented by socialism.

Thus, reflecting both the modernist problems of essentialism and Eurocentrism, the common criteria for evaluating British economic and political development have been the bourgeois paradigm and the overall experience of Continental Europe. In sum, the British experience tends to be conceived as an 'early variant', 'under-developed', 'half-hearted', 'deformed', 'failed', 'in decline', and so on, in relation to an ideal-typical characterisation of Continental European modernist development. Furthermore, these problems have tended to be reflected in the analysis of British-European relations. Accordingly, the British position upon European integration is conceived as 'awkward', 'reluctant' and 'flawed' in relation to an ideal-typical perception of the stance of Continental Europe. Similarly, previous analyses have assumed that the British acceptance of this position will

---

[45] Meiskens-Wood, E. (1991) *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism*. (London: Verso).

provide it with an opportunity to embrace the Continental European project of modernity that is perceived as an ideal model for economic and political national development, and this despite significant limitations to this project.

In sum, capitalism and nationalism are integral features of modern democracy and essential moments of the discourse of modernity. The discourse of modernity is limited because it obstructs the possibility of non-capitalist and non-nationalist conceptions of European union and democracy. Thus, within the discourse of modernity, theory and practice relating to European union have tended to constitute part of the problem rather than part of the solution because they have inevitably reflected these limitations. That is, their national basis has served to reinforce the differences in discursive systems of national identity that have prevented the development of a supranational European identity, and their capitalist basis has prevented the possibility of a more socialist and democratic unity. As a consequence, it is necessary to seek solutions to these problems that may exist within different discourses, as will be pursued below.

3.3. Modernity and the primacy of the universal over the particular

Another related problem of the discourse of modernity is that it gives primacy to the universal over the particular. With the emergence of the discourse of modernity, the former divine foundation of reality was replaced by a rational foundation, which was not external but internal to the totality it was supposed to ground. The rational ground has a logic of its own that, in contrast to the designs of God, is fully transparent to human reason. The universal principle of rationality transcends all particular human beings, but as the former is fully comprehensible

---

[46] See: Mooers, C. (1991) *The Making of Bourgeois Europe*. (London: Verso).

by the latter, human beings can identify themselves with the universal principle of rationality and begin transforming society and nature in its image. This gives way to a complete subsumption of the particular under universal rationality.[47]

The Enlightenment saw in rationality a universal principle for reorganizing social and political life. Feudalism, religion and patrimonial administration had to give way to the market economy, science and bureaucratic administration. The highest point in the advance of modernity of this rationalistic hegemony was when the gap between the universal principle of rationality and the irrationality of the particular forms of reality was completely closed. This task was accomplished by Hegel and Marx who both asserted that 'the real is rational'.[48] As Laclau explains:

> The body of the proletariat is no longer a particular body in which a universality external to it has to be incarnated: it is instead a body in which the distinction between particularity and universality is cancelled and, as a result, the need for incarnation is definitely eradicated.[49]
>
> However, this was the point at which social reality refused to abandon its resistance to universal rationalism because an unresolved problem still remained: the universal had found its own body, but this was still the body of a certain particularity - *European culture of the Nineteenth Century*.[50] Thus, European culture was a particular one, and at the same time, the expression (rather than the incarnation) of universal human essence.

Here, the crucial problem is that there was no means of distinguishing between 'European particularism' and the universal functions that it was supposed to

---

[47] Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek*. (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell). p. 169.
[48] Ibid. p. 170.
[49] Laclau, E. (1996) [1992] 'Universalism, Particularism and the Question of Identity', in E. Laclau, *Emancipation(s).* (London: Verso). p. 24. Originally published in *October*, Volume 61, Summer, pp. 83-90.
[50] Ibid.

incarnate. European universalism had constructed its identity precisely through the cancellation of the logic of incarnation and, as a result, through the universalization of its own particularism. Thus, European imperialist expansion had to be represented not as struggles between particular identities and cultures, but as part of an all-embracing and epochal struggle between universality and particularisms - the notion of peoples without history expressing their incapacity to represent the universal.[51]

This argument could be conceived in negative, reactionary and very explicit racist terms (as in the various forms of social Darwinism) or could be given some more progressive versions (as in some sectors of the Second International). In these more progressive versions, the logic of incarnation was reintroduced: for a certain period, Europe had to represent universal human interests. A similar reintroduction of this logic took place in Marxism.[52]

Overall, a common feature of these different accounts is the metaphysical hierarchy privileging universality over particularity. The latter is either conceived as a corruption of being, a passive object of incarnation of universal events, or something that is completely absorbed by the universal principle of rationality. However, in contrast to the previous Christian incarnation, the secular eschatology of modernity conceives the source of the universal as internal to the world: the universal can only manifest itself through the establishment of an essentialist inequality between the objective positions of the social agents. Some of them are going to be privileged agents of historical change, not as a result of a contingent relation of forces, but because they are incarnations of the universal. The same

---

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid. pp. 25-26.

type of logic operating in Eurocentrism will establish the ontological privilege of the proletariat.[53]

4.0. In search of 'the Europe of the Mind'

Moving outside the discourse of modernity, both Alasdair MacIntyre[54] and Etienne Tassin look to classical ancient philosophy to address the problems associated with the discourse of modernity. Ancient philosophy maintains that there is a strict dividing line between the universal and the particular, and that the pole of the universal can be fully grasped by reason. No mediation is possible because the universal and the particular are mutually exclusive poles. Either the particular becomes universal by transforming itself into a transparent medium for the actualization of the universal (which is conceived as the source of all possible meaning); or it negates the universal by asserting its own particularism (which, because of its irrationality, can have no entity of its own and can thus only exist as a corruption of being).[55]

For the communitarian theory and neo-Aristotelian moral philosophy of MacIntyre, there is a fundamental gulf between the universal and the particular. Thus, either we accept the notion of the common good or we give up all reference to universal values. Faced with such a radical choice, MacIntyre insists upon the primacy of the universal over the particular. Similarly, as will now be examined, Tassin gives such a priority to the universal in his exploration of ancient Platonic philosophy in pursuit of a European political community.

---

[53] Ibid. p. 25.
[54] MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After Virtue*: *A Study in Moral Theory.* (London: Duckworth).
[55] Laclau, E. (1996) [1992] Op. Cit. p. 22.

In accordance with the concerns outlined above with regard to the limitations of modernity, Tassin advances a federal future for Europe that calls into question the traditional categories through which the political form of modern states has been conceptualized.[56] Following Edmund Husserl and Jan Patocka, Tassin argues that we must rediscover the Platonic ancient and spiritual telos of 'the European Mind' which once dedicated Europe to a transcendental universality that was not tied to any national tradition or will. Thus, it will now be examined whether this approach could overcome the national antagonisms and differences in national discourse that haved obstructed the possibility of a universal European identity. Here, as dictated by the focus of this thesis, attention will be given to the British particularisms that conflict with the rest of Continental Europe.

4.1. The European heritage of the universal

Etienne Tassin argues that the immediate post-war attempt to rebuild Europe failed because it was unified on the basis of nation-states. Moreover, such a national basis would only maintain the threat of national antagonisms and totalitarianism that had previously destroyed Europe. For Tassin, the problem is that the modern idea of Europe sprang from the political experience of resistance to Nazism, and hence, the idea of a European political community drew its meaning from an armed struggle, and broke both with the philosophical idea of Europe and with a political tradition. Hence, following Patocka, Tassin explores the philosophical concept of Europe, which sees the Greek city-state as the birthplace of the European mind in the shape of Platonic metaphysics.[57] For Patocka, only a philosophical understanding of the foundations of the European

---

[56] See: Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 170.
[57] Ibid. p. 173.

mind can restore meaning to a European Community enterprise that the Twentieth Century repudiated in the experience of two World Wars. As Patocka describes:

> Europe really was master of the world. As economic master, it developed capitalism and the commercial network of the global economy. As political master, it held a monopoly of power deriving from science and technology, all of which was linked to its level of reflection and to the rational civilization that it alone possessed. Europe was all of that. And this colossal reality was wiped out for good in the space of some thirty years, in two world wars which left nothing of its world-dominating power. It destroyed itself with its own forces. Of course, it drew the whole world into this process, just as before it had appropriated it materially. It forced the whole world to join in these destructive enterprises, with the result that successors came forward who would never accept that Europe should be what it once was.[58]

However, all that is to accept an 'inclusive' Europe, or at least some European defining commonalities. For Britain, which typically has wished historically to remain aloof from such a perspective, and indeed has maintained significant political, economic and cultural divergencies from such commonalities, there was a *national* sense of *victory* from this experience. In the Second World War, it had successfully defended its position as a world-dominating power and had defeated its rivals with the help of its main (and non-European ally), the US. The experience also deepened Britain's traditional powerful insularity and strong sense of xenophobia, much of which was a product of the unequal and dominant power relationship which Britain once enjoyed as an imperial power.

Thus, although the idea of Europe was destroyed during the two wars, British nationalism emerged more resolute than before. In all, the war experience deepened Britain's belief in itself as a powerful nation-state and exacerbated British national chauvinism and supremacism, reinforcing the misplaced notion that Britain is best and knows best. Indeed, Britain had traditionally perceived itself as the 'master of the master', as *the* world-dominating power. Thus, rather than

denying 'that Europe should be what it once was', Britain emerged from the war with deeper nation-state aspirations, a stronger xenophobia towards those nations it had fought against, and a greater sense of insularity, national chauvinism and supremacy (as illustrated in *Chapter 5*). These components of British exceptionalism suggest that Britain would not accept the necessity of a restored Europe of the Mind. It would not be perceived as a credible discourse.

Patocka argues that Europe found itself on this path to destruction because it followed a destiny that lead to the situation of 'modern man' in general. This is defined by three components: science and technology as a knowledge of domination; the sovereign state as the concrete organization of human society, and a profusion of sovereign states in disunity. These combined are said to account for the conflict that has turned Europe upside down. The disunity among states expresses a lack of political and mental unity that allows the logic of state domination to make unparalleled technological power a slave to its own ends.[59]

Again, as was demonstrated above, Britain was the birthplace of these three components, and since its traditions have been built upon these foundations - foundations that have not been shaken in the long duration of their existence - it is difficult for the Europe to disrupt them now. Within British hegemonic discourse, Europe cannot be anything other than a 'profusion of sovereign states in disunity' because the notion of the 'sovereign state as the concrete organization of human society' is the cornerstone of the British tradition of government. Moreover, this British nationcentric perception could be enough itself to keep Europe upon this disruptive path.

---

[58] Patocka, J. (1983) *Platon et l'Europe.* (Paris) pp. 16-17. As quoted and cited in Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p.190.
[59] Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 173-4.

However, Patocka emphasizes that the inner logic which governed the destiny of the European mind cannot, and should not, be ascribed to the 'philosophical wellsprings' of Europe. He argues that it is important to distinguish between the philosophical and historical-political concepts of Europe and not accuse the mental source of what pertains to political history. We are reminded that the political birth of Europe did not coincide with its philosophical birth, that it was not until the Middle Ages that it became a political concept designating a real political unity.

As Tassin illustrates, the philosophical concept of Europe emerged from the Greek 'polis' and the Roman Empire. On the one hand, the 'polis' died when the Greek world of mutually destroying urban communities fell apart. The Hellenistic period unfolded through the collapse of the city-state and the political notion of 'public liberty' associated with it. However, the concept of humanity was initiated by Hellenism and expressed itself politically in the forms of a world state, religion, and citizenship. These characteristics of late Hellenism then crystallized in the Roman Empire.

On the other hand, the Roman Empire lived spiritually on the heritage of the Greek polis, as this asserted itself in a law-governed state in which civil law was based upon the rights of citizens. Concurrently, however, the imperial ambition tended towards a hegemony that could only rest upon force and create a void around it. Universalism of thought, translated into a universality of law and institutions, housed within it a contradictory hegemonic logic that induced its decline. Despite this, however, this imperial disaster in turn left to invaded Europe the principles of the Greek mind: universality of thought and law, and more fundamentally, the

metaphysical principle developed by Plato which Patocka calls 'care of the soul'. [60] For Patocka, it is this legacy which today makes it possible to find in the idea of Europe 'a support amid general weaknesses and acquiescence in decline'.[61]

Thus, an original combination has merged through the dissociation of the historical logic that gave rise to political Europe from its spiritual or metaphysical foundation. *A* theorization of Europe's decline as a catastrophe, bound up with the establishment of nation-states and the deployment of metaphysics in the form of technological power, is conjoined to a theorization of Europe's spiritual permanence. Hence, Patocka could argue:

> Metaphysics, which issued from the specific historical situation of the decline of the Athens-type *polis*, gave shape to a legacy that could also survive the decline of the Hellenistic world and contribute, after the decline of the Roman Empire, to the formation of Europe in the proper sense of the term. The survival of this heritage naturally also involved its transformation, but the metaphysical basis remained.[62]

For Tassin, it is no accident that this philosophical enterprise, which has striven to preserve the philosophical meaning of Europe, is the work of a dissident thinker from Eastern Europe, seeking in philosophy the assurance that the source of his struggle has not perished with Europe's tilt into totalitarian systems. For Patocka:

> Europe is doing everything to avoid reflection about such things; no one is concerned about them. Since Husserl's *Krisis* no philosopher has really reflected upon the problem of Europe and the European heritage.[63]

Indeed, seeking to constitute itself as a political community after the Second World War, Western Europe was unable to do so with the philosophical conviction that the European heritage had not been lost. Western philosophy did not address the questions posed between 1930 and 1935 by Husserl who reaffirmed, in the

---

[60] See: Ibid. p. 174-5.
[61] Patocka, J. Op. Cit. p. 21. As quoted and cited in Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 174.
[62] Ibid. p. 139. As quoted and cited in Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. pp. 174-5.

face of war and the ordeal of genocide, the essentially Greek form of Europe. On the contrary, European philosophy appeared to have died intestate.[64]

In Vienna in 1935, Husserl had attempted to get to the heart of the 'phenomenon of Europe', which he believed to be distinguished by a telos of its own:

> An entelechy is inborn in our European civilization which holds sway throughout all the changing shapes of Europe and accords to them a sense of development toward an ideal shape of life and being as an eternal pole.[65]

This telos is said to have dedicated Europe's historicity to universality since its birth in Athens. The 'Urphänomen' or primal phenomenon, which spiritually defines Europe, rests upon what the Greeks called 'philosophy' - a theoretical attitude aiming at universality that confers an infinite task upon humanity. It is through this approach that thought extricates itself from a finite world to elaborate upon its truth. It is this attitude which is at the origin of the infinite construction of theoretical knowledge embodied in European thought. However, the dedication of philosophy to the universal creates a humanity that is not limited to any particular community. Since philosophy is not rooted in any practical interest, it does not derive from the interest of any national tradition. Rather, a pure and ideal community evolves based upon the power of ideas rather than nations. As Husserl argues, 'Ideas are stronger than any empirical powers'.[66]

---

[63] Ibid. p. 163. As quoted in Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 175.
[64] Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 175.
[65] Husserl, E. (1970) [1954] 'Appendix 1: Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity', *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenemenology*. p. 275. A lecture presented before the Vienna Cultural society on 7 and 10 May 1935. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press). Originally published in Germany as 'Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzentale Phänomenologie: Eine Einletung in die Phänomenologische Philosophie'. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff). The Vienna lecture appears in this original German edition as the third 'Abhandlung', pp. 314-48.
[66] Ibid. p. 288.

Thus, for Husserl, 'Europe' is the proper name of philosophy conceived as a conversion of humanity - it refers to this new ruling spirit of humanity, a 'treasure of associated nations', rather than to a juxtaposition of nations. A task is finally bestowed upon philosophy: 'Within European civilisations, philosophy has constantly to exercise its function as one which is archronic for civilisation as a whole'[67], regulating it according to the principles of absolute universality and the totality of truth. Hence, the European mind merges with the spirit of philosophy that merges with the spirit of humanity.[68]

According to Husserl, therefore, the existential crisis of Europe should be described as stemming from an alienation of reason in the face of the objectivist, naturalist modernist rationality evident in science. However, this rationality crisis is expressed politically in the modern impossibility of man being grasped at the spiritual level of community life. As Tassin describes:

> The spirit of community gives way to the spirit of national wills, distorted in the political discourse of particularities that are set up as so many sovereignties. This compartmentalization erects the mind against itself, and the various nations against Europe.[69]

For Husserl, this crisis has only two possible outcomes: either Europe will disappear by alienating itself from its Greek spiritual significance, or it will be reborn through 'the heroism of reason' to rediscover faith in the West's humanitarian mission and the conviction that 'the spirit alone is immortal'.[70]

---

[67] Ibid.
[68] Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 176.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Husserl, E. (1970) Op. Cit. p. 299.

4.2. Personalism and the federal response to totalitarianism

To overcome this crisis, Tassin examines the idea of a European federation, a conception grounded upon the resistance to Nazism and fascism. This idea was forged through contacts between many resistance movements. In particular, the Declaration of European Resistance Movements (July 1944) was formulated at secret meetings by representatives from nine European countries, including France, Italy, and the Netherlands (but not Britain), and proclaimed the 'necessity of rebuilding Europe on a federal basis'.[71] This presupposed that 'the various countries of the world agree to go beyond the dogma of absolute state sovereignty and integrate themselves into a federal organization'.[72] This agreement was deemed necessary considering that:

> .. within the space of a single generation Europe has been the epicentre of two world wars whose chief cause lies in the existence of some thirty sovereign states on this continent ... the main task is to cure this anarchy through the creation of a federal Union among the European peoples.[73]

This federal union would rest upon 'a declaration of civil, political and economic rights guaranteeing free development of the human personality and normal functioning of democratic institutions', and it would involve a government responsible to 'the peoples' rather than the member states of Europe.[74]

For the Resistance, therefore, Europe could not be rebuilt upon an assemblage of sovereign states separated by political frontiers because any recomposition on the model of the 'league of nations' or a sovereign state was likely to produce national

---

[71] 'Projet de Déclaration des Résistances Européennes', in Centre d'Action pour de Fédération Européenne (1945) *L'Europe de Demain* (Neuchâtel). pp. 68-75. Published in July 1945 as part of this collection of documents relating to the Declaration of European Resistance Movements. As quoted and cited in Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 182.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

conflicts, totalitarianism, and war. In particular, the idea of a federal Europe was grounded upon resistance to Nazi and then Stalinist totalitarianism. Totalitarianism was itself understood by the Resistance as an expression of the dogma of absolute state sovereignty - it was the direct offspring of the nation-state, pushing its principle to its extreme consequences. This position was held by Denis de Rougemont, who was a founder of Personalism and the most acute theorist of a federal Europe.[75] 'The nation-state' he proclaims, 'was one of Europe's creations and must inevitably, by its inner logic, become totalitarian'.[76] Evolving in its modern form with the French Revolution and Empire, the nation-state derived from a combination of two social and political realities: first, the nation, as a cultural, spiritual and ethical reality autonomous from any specific political structure. Second, the state, as a centralized administrative apparatus built upon the principle of 'absolute sovereignty'.

For de Rougemont, Europe could not become a community until the totalitarian logic of nationalism that had led the states into the destruction of the Europe of nations was overcome. Only through this ordeal could Europe hope to find a new basis. This new Europe could only be a federate community grounded on regions rather than states. The region, in reproducing the human scale of the ancient Greek cities, offered a community framework favourable to the exercise of genuine citizenship within *elective* rather than *natural*, or *native*, communities.

Following de Rougemont, we must recognise that beyond the nation-state framework that brought Europe to catastrophe, *the basic political unit has to be redefined.* De Rougemont argues that this redefined unit cannot be the commune,

---

[75] Along with Dandieu and Mounier, De Rougemont developed Personalism in the 1930s for which federalism was the corresponding politics.

but it must be the region federating the communes. In the dialectic of the particular (commune) and the universal (state), the federation of regions involves a reconciliation of communal interests raised to the higher power of Europe. It is a reconciliation and not a transcendence, a measure and not a middle term.[77] This is because the federal principle maintains the human scale of active political citizenship within a local community, while raising it beyond the national framework and allowing a genuine European community to be constituted. He proposes that Europe must be built in Proudhonian style from the 'bottom up' - not in order to destroy the state, as Proudhon imagined, but to redistribute it.[78]

Returning to the personalism of De Rougemont, and with regard to the dilemma of the universal and the particular, a federative regime would optimally combine the tension between *collective power* and *individual liberties* that reflects the Rousseaurian tension within each person between responsibility to the community and individual autonomy. Indeed, for De Rougemont, federalism is the only remedy for the twin evils of modern politics: *collectivism*, which denies individual liberties, and *individualism*, which denies responsibility to the community. It is by expressing this tension at the level of European institutions that De Rougemont argues that federalism can uphold the two contradictory principles of the universal and the particular: the *unity* of the whole and the *autonomy* of the parts, respectively. It is in this sense that Europe must be a federation of federations, where the region is recognised as its true socio-economic unit.'[79] However, as will now be examined, other approaches reject any reference to the universal and advance a pure particularism.

---

[76] de Rougemont, D. (1988) *Inédits*, Neuchâtel. p. 82. As quoted and cited in Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 183.
[77] Tassin, E. (1992) Op. Cit. p. 185.
[78] de Rougemont, D. (1988) Op. Cit. p. 174. As cited and quoted in Tassin, E. Op. Cit. p. 185.
[79] Ibid. p. 195.

5.0. The critique of the privileging of the universal

Certain multiculturalist and postmodern theorists have criticized the metaphysical privileging of the universal over the particular.[80] Similar to arguments outlined above in *Section 3.2*, multiculturalists have claimed that universal values are an ethnocentric preserve of western imperialism. In addition, as also argued above, postmodernists have argued that universal values are a totalitarian remnant of the foundationalist ontology of the Enlightenment. In the most radical multiculturalist and postmodernist theories, a 'pure particularism' is advanced; a monadic particularism that rejects any appeal or reference to universal values.[81] Ironically, these theories have much in common with the nationalist discourses of modernity that they vehemently reject, and thus, with the discourses which have obstructed supranational European integration.

5.1. The multiculturalist rejection of universal values

Traditionally, idealizing descriptions of societies with a high degree of cultural diversity used the metaphor of the 'melting pot'. Different cultural groups should blend with each other to become a larger community. Similarly, at the European level, proponents of neo-functionalism and supranationalism have argued that the different nations of Europe should integrate with each other in this way. However, the metaphor of a melting pot no longer seems to offer an adequate description of the multicultural society, and similarly, supranationalism no longer seems to offer an accurate description of the EU. Rather, it seems that the metaphor of the 'fruit bowl' provides a better description of the lack of integration and community of multicultural societies in the same way that intergovernmentalism provides a better

description of the lack of integration and community of the member states of the EU.

A growing number of multiculturalist theorists seem to conceive the harnessing of separate cultural identities as a normative good. Segregation and cultural autonomy are celebrated values, and it is emphasized that the assertion of one's own particular cultural identity is a necessary step in the struggle for a more equitable society. However, this is rather similar to the way in which nationalists and Eurosceptics have traditionally harnessed and celebrated national cultural autonomy. To a lesser extent, both neo-realist and domestic politics approaches have advanced an intergovernmental conception of European *cooperation* (as opposed to supranational *integration*) where national autonomy is not so much celebrated, but is assumed to be the central concern of the nation state in international action.

As well as being a potentially nationalistic obstruction to the development of a European community, it can also be argued that the celebration of radically autonomous national-cultural identities is both theoretically and politically self-defeating. It is theoretically self-defeating because the constitution of a separate differential identity must necessarily include relations to other identities within the system of differences as part of its own identity. These relations will be regulated by rules and norms that transcend the singularity of any particular identity. Thus, a pure particularism is not theoretically sustainable.[82]

---

[80] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 170.
[81] Ibid.
[82] See: Laclau, E. (1995) 'Subject of Politics, Politics of the Subject', *Differences*, Volume 7, No. 1, p. 147.

In addition, it is politically self-defeating in two different situations. The first situation is where a national-cultural identity withdraws from public debate and policy-making in the pursuit of the purity of its own particular identity. This is the route to self-aparthied and it is sometimes accompanied by the Eurocentric claim that Western values and institutions are the preserve of Europeans and have nothing to do with the identity of other groups living in the same territory. This is similar to the British Eurosceptic position that the institutions of the EU embody the values and interests of Continental Europe, and thus, that they should not be allowed to interfere with our separate and different way of life. In political terms, such a withdrawal will serve to maintain the balance of power between the various groups in society or between the various member states of the EU. As John Major argued against the Eurosceptics of his government, Britain must be at the heart of Europe so that it can influence the policies that will inevitably affect its national interests.

The second situation is where a national-cultural identity seeks to manifest itself politically in terms of its own particularity. The problem is that the attempt of a national-cultural minority to assert itself politically in the public realm will lead to political marginalization, and thus, to the erosion of the identity that was to be asserted. Therefore, a particular identity cannot represent itself, or advance its particular interests, without making reference to universal values. Hence, if Britain wants to maintain its particular identity as well as participate in EU negotiations, it follows that Britain must make reference to some common universal values.

Here, as reflected in British Euroscepticism, the dilemma for the defenders of extreme particularism is that their political action is anchored in a perpetual

incoherence. On the one hand, Eurosceptics are defending the right to difference as a universal right, and this difference involves their engagement in struggles for the negotiation of legislation. That is, they are engaged in a struggle for the internal reform of the present institutional setting of the EU. On the other hand, however, as they simultaneously assert both that this setting is necessarily rooted in the political-cultural values of the traditional dominant sectors of Continental Europe, *and that they have nothing to do with that tradition*, their demands cannot be articulated into any wider hegemonic operation to reform that system. Therefore, this position would condemn Britain to an ambiguous peripheral relationship with existing institutions of the EU that could only have paralyzing political effects.[83]

However, if reference to universal values is the condition of possibility for the advancement of the interests of a particular group or nation, it is also simultaneously the condition of impossibility for the maintenance of its particularity. The inscription of the interests of a particular nation within a European communitarian space of universal values will inevitably contribute to the 'hybridization' of the particularistic identity of that nation. Whether the particularity of British identity will be entirely lost, or only slightly modified, as a result of its insertion into a European communitarian space that has been ideologically and culturally moulded by the dominant nations of Continental Europe, is an open question which will be decided in and through political struggles for hegemony.

Thus, we cannot assert a differential identity without distinguishing it from a context, and, in the process of making that distinction, we are asserting the context at the same time. The opposite is also true: we cannot destroy a context

---

[83] See: Laclau, E. (1996) [1992] Op. Cit. p. 33.

without, at the same time, destroying the particular Subject who carries out that destruction.[84] As Laclau observes:

> It is a very well known historical fact that an oppositionist force whose identity is constructed within a certain system of power is ambiguous vis-à-vis that system, because the latter is what prevents the constitution of the identity and it is, at the same time, its condition of existence. And any victory against the system also destabilizes the identity of the victorious force.[85]

An important upshot of this argument is that if a fully achieved difference eliminates the antagonistic dimension as constitutive of any identity, the possibility of maintaining this dimension depends upon that very failure in the full constitution of a differential identity. It is here that the universal enters the argument. For example, let us take the constitution of the British identity. If this differential identity is fully achieved, it can only do so within a broader context - for instance, the EU - and the price to be paid for total victory within the context is total integration with it. That is, Britain's differential identity can only be perceived as such within a broader context that provides its constitutive outside, for example, the EU. However, the full achievement of such a British differential identity would prevent a fully integrated Europe, which in turn would prevent the achievement of the differential British identity by making its constitutive outside ambiguous. Thus, if total integration does not take place, it is because the British identity is not fully achieved - for example, there are unsatisfied economic, social and political demands. These demands cannot be made in terms of difference, but only in terms of some universal values that Britain shares with the rest of the EU.

This suggests that the universal is part of identity as far as it is penetrated by a constitutive lack - that is, as far as the differential identity has failed in its process of constitution. The universal emerges out of the particular not as some principle

---

[84] Ibid. p. 27.

underlying and explaining the particular, but as an incomplete horizon suturing a dislocated particular identity. This points to a new way of conceiving the relations between the universal and the particular:

> ... the universal is the symbol of a missing fullness and the particular exists only in the contradictory movement of asserting at the same time a differential identity and cancelling it through its subsumption in the non-differential medium.[86]

5.2. The postmodern rejection of universal values

As aforementioned, certain postmodern arguments seem to lead to the rejection of the idea of universal values as ethnocentric/Eurocentric and ultimately totalitarian. Thus, by simply replacing the universalism of modernity with that of the ancient 'Europe of the Mind', they would argue that Tassin does not overcome the problem of Eurocentrism or the threat of totalitarianism. Such postmodernists claim that cultural pluralism must be defended since all values are contextual, and all contexts are incommensurable due to the absence of a common ontological ground.[87] Although Laclau accepts this argument, he believes that it is problematic to simply conclude that the presence of a multiplicity of incommensurable contexts and identities renders the reference to universal values obsolete.

Here we are again faced with two situations, both of which assume that the absence of universal values will lead to some kind of Hobbesian 'state of nature' within which the incommensurable identities will destroy each other in antagonistic clashes. As this research has emphasized, in the absence of a universal European identity and universal European values, there is a concern that Europe

---

[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid. p. 28.
[87] Laclau, E. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 151.

could once again be destroyed by national antagonisms. In this context, the first situation is one in which the mutual destruction of the plurality of separate identities is prevented by the construction of a stable system of differences.[88] However, from this Hobbesian solution, we arrive back at the theoretical argument against the multiculturalist appraisal of a system of pure particularisms, which has been exposed as a contradiction of terms because every system of differences relies upon universal values.

By contrast, the second situation is one in which the mutual destruction of the plurality of separate identities engaged in antagonistic clashes is prevented by a pre-established harmony of purely differential identities, which are related in and through their separations and exclusions, but which do not form part of a system of differences in the sense of an internally differential totality.[89] Here, however, we need to account for the total ground that constitutes the differences as such.[90] However, even assertion of the presence of purely differential identities ultimately requires a reference to some kind of universalism.[91] Thus, it can be concluded that even the most extreme multiculturalist and/or postmodern assault upon the notion of universal values seems to presuppose what it excludes.

As Laclau explains, pure particularism invokes a paradox:

> I can defend the right of sexual, racial and national minorities in the name of particularism; but if particularism is the only valid principle, I have to also accept the rights to self-determination of all kinds of reactionary groups involved in antisocial practices.[92]

---

[88] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 172.
[89] Ibid. p. 173.
[90] Laclau, E. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 157.
[91] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 173.
[92] Laclau, E. (1996) [1992] Op. Cit. p. 26.

Moreover:

> ... as the demands of various groups will necessarily clash with each other, we have to appeal - short of postulating some kind of pre-established harmony - to some more general principles in order to regulate such clashes. In actual fact, there is no particularism which does not make appeal to such principles in the construction of its own identity.[93]

Similarly, during the process of European integration, as the demands of various member states will also conflict with each other, we have to appeal to some more universal principles in order to regulate such clashes. As *Chapter 7* illustrates, Laclau and Mouffe propose an appeal to the principles of 'freedom and equality for all' in the pursuit of a radical plural democracy and citizenship. Hence, it will be assessed whether this pursuit could help overcome the conflict between the various identities of the EU.

6.0. A discourse-theoretical approach to the question of a European identity

Similar to the other interpretations examined above, the discourse-theoretical approach advanced by this thesis accepts that there is a chasm between the universal and the particular. However, it challenges the idea that a radical choice must be made between them. By deconstructing the notions of the universal and the particular, it is proposed that we can account for their mutual conditioning. That is, by the tension between the universal and the particular can be resolved by problematizing the underlying assumptions that makes them contradictory. It then becomes possible to inscribe them within a Derridean undecidable logic that incorporates both without privileging one or the other. As a consequence, the

[93] Ibid.

privileging of either are conceived as political attempts to arrest the undecidable game between the universal and the particular.[94]

To elucidate, Laclau provides an alternative way of conceiving the relations between the universal and the particular:

> ...the universal is the symbol of a missing fullness and the particular exists only in the contradictory movement of asserting at the same time a differential identity and cancelling it through its subsumption in the non-differential medium.[95]

As identified above, the discourse-theoretical approach rejects the pursuit of a pure particularism as politically and theoretically dangerous, as well as ineffectual in relation to the pursuit of a supranational European identity. Moreover, in order to meet the challenge presented by the retreat and return of the universal, the relation between particularity and universality is rethought in such a way that prevents reduction of the particular to the universal (as evident in classical ancient philosophy, the discourse of modernity, and in the federal and neo-functional theories of supranational European integration), as well as the reduction of the universal to the particular (as evident in multiculturalism, some versions of postmodernism, and neo-realist and domestic politics approaches to intergovernmental European cooperation).

This rethinking begins with the proposition that all systems - whether or not they have the form of an internally differentiated totality of separate identities - must establish some more or less stable limits. Without boundaries, there can be no system. The limits of a system are constitutive of its systematic character.[96]As explained in *Chapters 3, Sections 4.2-3.*, the limits of a system cannot be

---

[94] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 168.
[95] Laclau, E. (1996) [1992] Op. Cit. p. 28.
[96] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 173.

established in reference to an underlying positive essence. Neither can the limits of a system be established in terms of its differential relation with identities outside the system: since all identity is differential, it would be impossible to identify which differential identities were internal or external to the system. Thus, the only possibility is that the limits of a system are established in terms of the exclusion of a radical (and threatening) otherness (or constitutive outside) that does not present itself as yet another difference, but rather involves the expansion of a chain of equivalence. That is, construction of the limits of a system involves the construction of a social antagonism.[97]

This proposition is significant because it makes it possible to rethink the relationship between the universal and the particular. It is proposed that, whenever a system is constructed through the exclusion of a radical otherness, a universal chain of equivalence will be established between the particular identities that are part of the system.[98] The universal will emerge out of the particular as an irreducible dimension of the chain of equivalence expands as a result of the negation of the particular identities. Hence, to overcome antagonisms and develop a universal European identity, a universal chain of equivalence must be established between the particular identities of the EU through the exclusion of a common radical otherness. That is, the construction of a universal European identity must involve the construction of a social antagonism with something outside its limits.

Thus, the dimension of universality reached will not take the form of an unconditional a priori principle nor a regulative idea in the sense of an empirically

---

[97] See: Laclau, E. (1994) 'Why Do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?', in J. Weeks (ed.) *The Lesser Evil and the Greater Good*. (London: Rivers Oram Press). pp. 168-9, Laclau, E. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 151.

unreachable telos that consistently guides our actions, as with Tassin's 'Europe of the Mind'. It cannot exist prior to, and independently of, the system of equivalences from which it proceeds.[99] Hence, this is a universality that will only exist as a dimension of the chain of equivalences that links the particular identities. Similar to the 'Europe of the Mind', it may have its roots in the experience of a common destiny, and it may be invoked by the idea of a common cause. Unfortunately, the existing commonality is the pursuit of a European trading bloc that can successfully compete in the global capitalist market. As this thesis argues, a broader political and supranational commonality is required if a new European identity is to be constructed. In sum, we need a common cause that will overcome the democratic deficits and national antagonisms that have plagued Europe's past. As indicated, the following chapter will explore whether Laclau and Mouffe's radical democratic pursuit of 'freedom and liberty for all' could provide such a commonality for Europe.

As the universal chain of equivalence expands to include all the various demands, struggles and groupings, it will become evident that it does not possess a positive content of its own. The dimension of universality is just an 'empty place' that unifies a set of equivalential demands.[100] Hence, the universal is the very principle of positivity, a pure Being in which all the particularities are reflected. The content of this empty place is partially fixed in and through political struggles between the particular identities caught up in the chain of equivalence. The various identities of the EU have aimed to hegemonize the empty place of the universal, as is evident in the process of European integration; the conflict between Britain and Continental Europe reflects a struggle to hegemonize this empty place. The

---

[98] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 174.
[99] Laclau, E. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 154.
[100] Ibid. p. 155.

particular identity that succeeds in filling this empty place of the universal will have achieved hegemony in Europe. As a consequence, with regard to *Chapter 4*, it will be their particular ideas and meanings that will be signified by the floating signifiers of Europe. However, since Continental European member states represent the largest consensus in the EU, it is likely that their ideas and meanings will remain hegemonic in Europe, and this would merely reinforce the existing antagonism between Britain and Continental Europe. As has been evident, a German-Franco consensus has been a particularly powerful alliance in the Council of Ministers.

Thus, to overcome such national antagonisms between member states, we must identify non-national hegemonic agents that can hegemonize this empty space. Moreover, as examined below and developed further in *Chapter 7*, such non-national hegemonic agents would represent the proliferation of new political struggles that has emerged in Europe and which reflects an increasing diversity in identifications and subject positions in Europe. Furthermore, these new political struggles could hegemonize a more democratic content for the European universal.

However, any hegemony involves the construction of a 'common will' in the Gramscian sense of a political project that is shaped in and through the political struggles for hegemony.[101] The unevenness of the structural positions in Europe means that not hegemonic agents are equally capable of becoming hegemonic. This unevenness constrains and facilitates the formulation and realization of the political strategies of those forces.[102] Hence, it can be concluded that there is a circular relationship between the universal and the particular: the universal

emerges out of the negation of the particular (national) identities, but its content is fixed in and through political struggles for hegemony, in which particular demands are universalized and others are marginalized.[103]

6.1. Hegemony and empty signifiers

The dimension of universality refers to a community that is empty because it is denied by an antagonistic force that is the *constitutive outside* of the system.[104] The empty place of the universal can only be signified by an *empty signifier*, that is, a signifier that is not attached to any signified due to the incessant sliding of the signifieds under the signifier. For example, 'European union' is an empty signifier that signifies the absence of a community of fully achieved identities. Therefore, empty signifiers (or nodal points) - such as 'order', 'unity' or 'democracy' - function to signify the absent communitarian fullness. Why particular signifiers assume this function is determined in and through political struggles for hegemony. But how does a particular political force manage to hegemonize the empty place of the universal?

Here, a new political force in Europe cannot simply fill the empty place of the universal by asserting its unmediated particularity and advancing its own particular interests. To become hegemonic, it must successfully present its particularity as the incarnation of the empty signifier that refers to the empty communitarian fullness.[105] That is, it must turn the particular content of its demands into an embodiment of the signifier of the empty universality. For example, if unity and

---

[101] Laclau, E. (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 175-6.
[102] Ibid. pp. 174-5.
[103] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 175.
[104] Ibid. p. 176.
[105] Laclau, E. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 176.

democracy are the empty signifiers that signify the absent communitarian fullness in Europe, a new hegemonic project will be successful if it presents itself as the *credible* response to these demands. In other words, shifting the point of enunciation implies a transformation of the content of the enunciation. This is the major aim of hegemonic operations. In sum, the presence of empty signifiers is the very condition of hegemony.[106]

6.2. The constitutive split of the hegemonic agent

There are important consequences of the successful attempt of a political force to present its particular project and demands as an embodiment of the empty signifier (or nodal point) that signifies the empty universal. Hegemonic victory is achieved only at the expense of a loss of identity. Such is the direct result of the universalization of the particular content of the project and demands of the hegemonic agent. Thus, the hegemonic agent is constitutively split between the particularity of its project and demands and the universal function of the latter, which requires the transformation of this very particularity into a surface of inscription through which all political struggles will be expressed.[107]

In sum, the universal is an empty place and the hegemonic forces that aim to fill that place are constitutively split between the concrete politics that they advocate and the ability of those politics to fill the empty place'.[108] This 'constitutive split' is acknowledged by western philosophy, which has examined the split between the universal and the particular in and through the construction of different images of

---

[106] Ibid. p. 175.
[107] Ibid. p. 177.
[108] Laclau, E. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 159.

the ruler.[109] This is illustrated by Plato's 'philosopher-king', Hobbes' 'sovereign', Hegel's 'hereditary monarch', and Gramsci's 'hegemonic class'. As will now be examined, the Anglo-philosophy of Hobbes differs in this respect to the Platonic philosophy upheld by the 'Europe of the Mind', which was explored above by Tassin. This conflict is significant to this thesis because the English possessive individualism of Hobbes had a significant impact upon the development of the British hegemonic discourse that obstructs the possibility of a return of the Platonic conception of the European mind, and thus, Tassin's vision of a new European political community.

6.3. Plato versus Hobbes

Hobbes and Plato represent two polar extremes in the sense that Plato believes that the universal is the only place of fullness, whilst Hobbes argues that it is an absolutely empty place. For Plato, the universal is the fullness of being that fully absorbs the particular, but for Hobbes, the universal is an empty place that is ultimately reduced to the particular order imposed by the Leviathan.[110] According to Hobbes, faced with the threat of radical disorder in the state of nature, the universal need for order is more important that the actual order which fulfils it. Indifference to the content of the social order gives way to an exclusive concentration on the ordering function of the latter.[111] This is precisely what legitimizes the sovereign, the mortal God who has 'ex hypothesis' the function of ensuring order. No other force can guarantee order because power in the 'state of nature' is equally distributed among the members of society, thus preventing the

---

[109] See: Ibid. pp. 160-4.
[110] Laclau, E. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 177-8.
[111] See: Laclau, E. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 161.

generation of effects of domination that could lead to the construction of partial and competing orders around the different power centres.

In all, this Hobbesian conception, reflected in British hegemonic discourse, obstructs the return of the Platonic conception of the European Mind advanced by Tassin. However, although Hobbes and Plato disagree with regard to the nature of the universal and its relation to the particular, they agree not to allow the particular any dynamics of its own vis-à-vis the full/empty place of the universal.[112] For Plato, the particular actualizes a universality that transcends it, for Hobbes, the particular order imposed by Leviathan becomes the unchangeable Law of the community. In both cases, it is this failure to account for the transient forms of the particular filling of the universal that prevents the development of a theory of hegemony.[113] As will now be explained, the concept of hegemony is crucial to the discourse-theoretical approach to constructing a European universal identity.

6.4. The limits of hegemony

Both Gramsci and Hegel have advances conceptions of social crises as partial dislocations of the social order.[114] Following these theorists, Laclau concludes that the hegemonic operation is a constitutive political act that is made possible by dislocation, but must always consider and aim to hegemonize the sedimented social relations. Thus:

> ... the succession of hegemonic regimes can be seen as a series of 'partial covenants' - partial because, as society is more structured than in Hobbes, people have more conditions to enter into the political

---

[112] Ibid.
[113] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 179.
[114] See: Ibid. p. 180.

> covenant; but partial also because, as the result of that, they also have more reason to substitute the sovereign.[115]

This conception of hegemonic regimes as 'partial covenants' relates to the question of the limits of the attempt to hegemonize the empty place of the universal.

In contrast to theoretical trends in modernity and the ancient Platonic philosophy of Tassin, discourse theory holds that it is not possible for a particular content to fully suture the empty place of the universal. The content of the universal cannot be constructed in a way that eliminates all opposition and rule without further discussion. Particular embodiments of the universal will always fail to deliver the goods. As Laclau explains, there is a paradox implicit in the formulation of universal principles, and thus, in the hegemonic attempt to fill the empty place of the universal: universal principles have to present themselves as valid without exception, although, even in its own terms, this universality can easily be questioned and never actually maintained.[116] Such principles express a universality that transcends the particularity of the context of their emergence, and it is precisely this claim to universal validity that makes possible a chain of equivalential effects: different people of different nations in different situations can claim to have the same rights. There are many contexts in which these universal rights will be perfectly valid. However, as these universal rights are applied to still more contexts, problems will eventually arise as the particularity of new contexts will not allow the application of universal rights formulated in another and entirely different context. At some point, these rights will become entangled in their own

---

[115] Laclau, E. (1995) Op. Cit. p. 163.
[116] Ibid. p. 155.

'contextual particularism' and will be incapable of continuing their universal function.[117]

6.5. Constitutive representation

The role of representation is important to the discussion of the universal and the particular because it is the process through which hegemonic agents attempt to inscribe *particular* identities within a *universal* context. However, a discourse-theoretical approach rejects the orthodox modernist conceptions of *perfect representation* that have pursued the transparent transmission of a preconstituted will of the represented by a neutral representative. By contrast, this thesis emphasizes the *constitutive impurity* of representation. To elucidate, the very logic inherent in the process of representation means that the conditions of a perfect representation are not obtained on the part of the represented nor on that of the representative. The problem for the represented is that if they need to be represented, it is because their basic identity is established in a place A (for example, Britain), which is different from the place B where important decisions affecting this basic identity are to be taken (for example, the Council of Ministers). The absence of a full presence at the decisive level of political decision-making can be conceived as a flaw in the identity of the represented and thus, the role of representation is to provide the supplement necessary for achieving the fully constituted identity of the represented.[118]

Thus, the function of the representative is to inscribe the interests of the represented in a complex reality different from the one in which these interests

---

[117] Ibid. p. 156.
[118] Ibid. p. 184.

were originally formulated. That is, in order to present the interests of the represented, the representative will have to reconstruct and transform the interests and identities that they represent. Hence, the supplementary act of representation will ultimately lead to the hybridization of the identities of the represented.[119]

In sum, relations of representation are constitutive of what they represent, and thus, they always transform the particular identities that are represented by the hegemonic agent.[120] Moreover, following Laclau, there is an important implication of this *constitutive impossibility* of representation:

> ... the problem of democratic control is not one of making the relation of representation transparent, so that it fully expresses the will of the represented, because that will was not there in the first place. Rather it consists in making the represented participate as much as possible in the formation of a new will, to ensure as much as possible their complicity in all the impurities and uneveness that the process of representation presupposes.[121]

Thus, with regard to the British Eurosceptic claim that the EU fails to represent the British people, this argument fails to acknowledge that *any* act of representation, including that of British parliament, must necessarily negotiate and rearticulate the interests of the represented. Second, in relation to the democratic and identity deficits of the EU, Laclau's insights suggest that we should abandon the pursuit of 'perfect representation' in Europe and focus instead upon improving the participation of the people of Europe in the formation of their own common European destiny. As argued above, the identity deficit of the EU represents a failure to produce a will that can challenge 'nationhood', and thus, improving

---

[119] See: Laclau, E. (1993a) 'Power and Representation', in Foster (ed.) *Politics, Theory and Contemporary Culture*. (New York: Columbia University Press). pp. 290-1.
[120] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 183.
[121] Laclau, E. (1993b) 'The Signifiers of Democracy', in J. H. Carens (ed.) *Democracy and Possessive Individualism: The Intellectual Legacy of C. B. Macpherson*. (New York: State University of New York Press). p. 230.

participation would help overcome this problem, as has been exemplified by the phenomenon of British Euroscepticism.

6.6. Representing multiple identities in Europe

It is also possible to observe the constructed character of what is represented from the perspective of the hegemonic agent that claims to represent the absent communitarian space of unachieved social identities. In Europe, national hegemonic agents have tended to authorize their dominant position by referring to their embodiment of the will of the people. Similarly, the institutions of the EU must be able to authorize their dominant position over national governments by referring to their embodiment of the will of the European people. At both national and supranational levels, the hegemonic agent will aim to present itself as the true and only incarnation of popular sovereignty. Here, there is an observable problem for representation in Europe in the sense that national and supranational hegemonic agents cannot both claim to be the true and only incarnation of the will of the people. There is a tension between supranational and national representation that can only be resolved by the withdrawal or subordination of one or the other.

Moreover, in contrast to essentialist modernist approaches, a discourse-theoretical approach can elucidate how the existence of a plurality of unachieved particular identities exposes the representation of these in terms of a popular will as a constitutive representation. The will of the people must be constructed from the manifold interests of the particular groups that are interpellated in the name of

the people.[122] According to the postmodern theorizing of Laclau and Mouffe, the constitutive role of political representatives is currently becoming more visible as the particular social agents increasingly become 'multiple selves'.[123] Therefore, it is becoming less and less possible for the people of Europe to refer to a single or primary ground (such as the nation) upon which their identity depends. Thus, supranational non-national hegemonic agents may successfully become hegemonic if they appeal to, and represent, the plurality of non-national identifications of contemporary Europe.

Following Laclau and Mouffe, such a proliferation of points of identification in the postmodern world have tended to produce loosely integrated and highly unstable identities. The process of representation can no longer be seen as merely a supplement to relatively well-defined identities, but rather becomes a primary terrain for the construction of such identities. Hence, at the European level, there is a risk that such loosely integrated and highly unstable identities will become represented (and thus, rearticulated) by political forces that celebrate a harnessing of separate and differential identities (national or otherwise) within a 'thin' European community. Indeed, the predominantly economic and intergovernmental basis of the EU represents such a 'thin' conception.

In Europe, such a celebration of a harnessing of separate and differential identities can be viewed as problematic because a dual structure may develop, consisting of a private European sphere of law-protected segregation and a public European sphere governed by a quasi-omnipotent technocracy. In this sense, Europe would return to the Middle Ages. As argued above by Tassin, an alternative is for Europe to return to the 'Europe of the Mind' in pursuit of a 'thick'

---

[122] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 185.

community that represents a political and supranational unity. However, as explored in *Chapter 7*, Laclau and Mouffe provide another possible path: to take difference, particularity and the lack of well-defined identities as the starting point, and inscribe this plurality in equivalential logics by emphasizing common values, goals, and experiences. Such a chain of equivalence could open the way to a relative universalization of a collective will that could be the basis for a new popular hegemony in Europe.[124]

Conclusion

In sum, difficult questions are invoked by the premise that any particular identity in Europe involves the affirmation of the right to a separate existence. The separation or 'right of difference' has to be asserted within the European community - that is, within a space in which that particular identity has to coexist with other identities. How could such a coexistence be possible without some shared universal values, without a sense of belonging to a community larger than each of the particular identities in question? So far, agreements between the different national identities in Europe have been made through negotiation. As neo-realism assumes, this negotiation is a process of mutual pressures and concessions whose outcome depends only on the balance of power between antagonistic nation states. It is obvious that no sense of community can be constructed through this type of negotiation. Similar to Tassin, Laclau emphasizes that this type of negotiation can only be one of potential war.[125]

---

[123] Laclau, E. (1993a) Op. Cit. p. 291.
[124] See: Ibid. p. 164.
[125] Laclau, E. (1996) [1992] Op. Cit. p. 32.

Thus, for a successful European unity, it must be recognised that the existing universal values of European are problematic, and thus, that they must be modified. But how can this modification be achieved? In addition, can any agents for such change be identified? As indicated above, the dilemma is that the political action of particularist struggles is anchored in a perpetual incoherence. However, this dilemma can be avoided by negating the universal dimension of the existing modernist discourse, and this requires an acceptance of its contingency. It must be affirmed that the historical link between the universal values of the West and the traditional dominant groups that they serve is a contingent and unacceptable element that can be modified through political struggles. Thus, it could be these struggles that will modify the existing hegemony discourse of Europe.

As was argued above, such modification is required because the universal ideas and values of Western modernity are limited and no longer pertain to the contemporary world. As modernist theory and practice were originally developed for national and homogeneous societies, they obstruct democratic representation of supranational and multicultural communities. Moreover, as Tassin argued, such modernist ideas and values are potentially totalitarian. Thus, as argued by Laclau and Mouffe in the following chapter, we need to develop a new concept of democracy that is fully adaptable to these present circumstances.

The unresolved tension (or constitutive split) between universalism and particularism makes it possible to move away from the Eurocentrism of modernity through a 'systematic decentring of the West'.[126] Such Eurocentrism resulted from the failure of modernity to differentiate between its universal values and the concrete social agents that were incarnating them. However, as Laclau explains,

discourse-theoretical insights make it possible to proceed to a separation of these two aspects:

> If social struggles of new social actors show that the concrete practices of our society restrict the universalism of our political ideals to limited sectors of the population, it becomes possible to retain the universal dimension while widening the spheres of its application - which, in turn, will define the concrete contents of such universality.[127]

Through this process, universalism as a horizon is expanded at the same time as its *necessary* attachment to any particular content, such as that of modernity, is broken. As explained above, the opposite pursuit - that of rejecting universalism *in toto* as the particular content of the ethnia of Western Europe - can only lead to a blind alley.

This preferred pursuit still leaves us with a paradox: as argued above, the universal does not have a concrete content of its own, but is an always receding horizon resulting from the expansion of an indefinite chain of equivalent demands. Therefore, the universal is incommensurable with the particular, but cannot exist without the latter. This paradox cannot be resolved, and it is precisely its non-solution that is the very condition of politics.[128] Its solution would imply that a particular body had been identified as the *true* body of the universal. In that case, the universal would have found its *necessary* location and thus, democracy would be impossible. Hence, if democracy is possible, it is because the universal has no necessary or fixed content. As evident in the process of European integration, member states compete to give their particularisms a temporary function of universal representation. This process has generated a whole vocabulary of empty signifiers whose temporal signifieds are the result of a political competition

---

[126] Ibid. p. 34.
[127] Ibid.
[128] See: Laclau, E. and L. Zac (1994) 'Minding the Gap: The Subject of Politics', in E. Laclau (ed.) *The Making of Political Identities*. (London: Verso). p. 37.

between these member states, as demonstrated in *Chapter 4*. It is this final failure of the EU to constitute itself as a community that makes the distance between the universal and particular unbridgeable, and thus, burdens concrete social agents with the impossible task of making democratic interaction achievable.

In all, it must be recognised that the existing universal discourse of modernity is problematic and contingent, and thus, that it must and can be modified. The essentialist and Eurocentric foundation of modernity has limited the possibility of progressive change because its ideas are advanced as the n*ecessary* and *true* body of the universal. By contrast, it is precisely the unresolved tension (or constitutive split) between universalism and particularism that makes it possible to break the necessary attachment of the universal with the particular content of modernity. That is, by breaking the political attempt by modernity to privilege its essentialist universal discourse, it becomes possible to identify alternative and more credible discourses for a new democratic European identity.

Chapter 7

Radical Plural Democracy: A New European Social Imaginary?

Introduction

As the previous chapter illustrated, there are significant problems specific to the discourse of modernity that have obstructed the development of a democratic European identity. Moreover, the supranational political changes that may be invoked in the future by the neo-functional logic of spill-over, and by the external dynamics of global change predicted by Preston, may only be those necessary for effective competition in the global economic market. It is a major concern of this thesis that such integration would not resemble the development of a democratic European social imaginary. Thus, this final chapter will explore whether a discourse-theoretical approach can provide a way of developing a more democratic universal discourse for Europe.

As explained in the introduction of this thesis, although discourse theory itself is politically indeterminate, Laclau and Mouffe aim to provide an anti-essentialist solution to the 'crisis of the left' and the advancement of a new post-Marxist[1] strategy of radical plural democracy. In broader terms, Laclau and Mouffe believe that the possibility of a democratic 'postmodern' politics is underscored by the

proposition that postmodernity is a crisis of the self-foundation of modernity and *not* a crisis of its political project. This thesis shares the aim of Laclau and Mouffe to disentangle political liberalism from the rationalism of the Enlightenment, and also to free it from its association with capitalism and its correlate of economic liberalism.[2] Similar to Lawrence Wilde, this research also believes that the process of European integration has given the Left an opportunity to abandon flawed and outdated pursuits of 'national roads' to socialism and renew its commitment to internationalism.[3]

Significant to these pursuits, Mouffe[4] has developed a concept of democratic citizenship that goes beyond liberalism and communitarianism and which can be realized through the conception of radical plural democracy. For Mouffe, 'democratic citizenship' and 'radical plural democracy' are nodal points in a social imaginary that should replace the Jacobin imaginary of the Left. Thus, the aim is to help overcome the crisis of the Left by developing a new hegemonic project that articulates liberal and communitarian values with traditional socialist goals. This chapter will examine whether such a hegemonic project could provide a democratic and universal identity for Europe. *Section 1* explores the possibility of a radical plural democracy in Europe, and *Section 2* considers the possibility of a radical plural democratic citizenship. In *Section 3*, the credibility of these initiatives will be discussed in relation to the possibility of a democratic and universal

---

[1] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics.* (London: Verso). pp. 4-5, and Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1987) 'Post-Marxism without Apologies', *New Left Review*, Volume 166, pp. 79-106.

[2] Mouffe, C. (1987) 'Rawls: Political Philosophy without Politics', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Volume 13, No. 2. pp. 105-6; Mouffe, C. (1992a) Preface: Democratic Politics Today', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. (London: Verso). pp. 2-3.

[3] See: Wilde, L. (1994) *Modern European Socialism*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth). pp. 171-86.

[4] Although both Laclau and Mouffe have shared a common commitment to a radical plural democracy, Mouffe has developed much of the work on this subject. It is also evident that most of the work on the theoretical propositions of discourse theory have been developed by Laclau.

European identity that includes Britain within its constitutive limits. Finally, *Section 4* will examine the practical implications of the theoretical arguments for a radical plural democracy in Europe.

1.0. A radical plural democracy for Europe?

Mouffe argues that 'the objective of the Left should be the extension and deepening of the Democratic Revolution initiated two hundred years ago'.[5] The Left must learn from the tragic experience of totalitarianism, and seek to advance a 'radical plural democracy'. Liberal democracy should not be rejected as a sham, but should be radicalized through an immanent critique of its limitations. For Laclau and Mouffe, there is much progressive potential in extending and deepening liberal democracy since it upholds the most radical principle for organizing society, namely that all humans are free and equal. Also, by radicalizing liberal democracy in relation to the inherent tension between *individual freedom* and *collective rights*, a radical solution may be uncovered for the research-specific tension between individual national interests and a collective Europe.

1.1. A *radical* plural democracy

The prefix of 'radical' to 'plural democracy' has three interrelated meanings that are constructive in relation to this research focus. First, in contrast to essentialist modernist conceptions, plural democracy should be 'radical' in the sense that the plurality of different identities is not grounded in any transcendent or underlying positive ground. It will involve the struggle for a maximum autonomization of

spheres of struggle on the basis of the generalization of the equivalential-egalitarian logic.[6]

Second, plural democracy, and the struggles for freedom and equality it engenders, should be deepened and extended to all areas of society.[7] It involves the pluralization of democracy and the displacement of the Democratic Revolution to more fields of the social.[8] With regard to this point, the struggle for a radical plural democracy aims to displace the quest for 'freedom and equality for all' to the economic sphere. Thus, it undermines the traditional liberal democratic line of demarcation between the public sphere of democratic politics and the private sphere of economic liberalism. This displacement is crucial because it makes it possible to conceive the intrinsic link between the struggle for radical plural democracy and the struggle for a socialist project in Europe. As Laclau and Mouffe propose:

> ... every project for radical democracy implies a socialist dimension, as it is necessary to put an end to capitalist relations of production, which are the root of numerous relations of subordination; but socialism is *one* of the components of radical democracy, not vice versa.[9]

The struggle for a radical plural democracy in Europe would involve the socialization of the means of production, and this would mean true participation by all subjects.[10]In different terms, this displacement of the line between the public democratic sphere and the private economic liberal sphere also allows us to conceive a European union that represents a democratic unity rather than merely a liberal economic strategy.

---

[5] Mouffe, C. (1992a) Op. Cit. p. 1.
[6] Laclau, E and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 167.
[7] Mouffe, C. (1990) 'Radical Democracy or Liberal Democracy?', *Socialist Review*, May, p. 57.
[8] Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek*. (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell). p. 256.
[9] Laclau, E and C. Mouffe (1985) Ibid. p. 178.
[10] Ibid.

Third, plural democracy is 'radical' because the basic tension between its liberal and democratic aspects implies that the condition of possibility of a further democratization of society is also the condition of impossibility. It can only be an incomplete and conflictual project because the pursuit of a fully democratic society would necessarily involve the creation of a totally transparent society in which all tensions and all forms of repression are themselves repressed, and this would be a totalitarian nightmare.[11] As Žižek explains:

> They (Laclau and Mouffe) emphasize that we must not be 'radical' in the sense of aiming at a radical solution: we always live in an interspace and in borrowed time; every solution is provisional and temporary, a kind of postponing of a fundamental impossibility. Their term 'radical democracy' is thus to be taken somehow paradoxically: it is precisely *not* 'radical' in the sense of pure, true democracy; its radical character implies, on the contrary, that we can save democracy only by *taking into account its own radical impossibility*.[12]

It is the very impossibility of a fully achieved democracy that prevents radical plural democracy from providing a perfectly realizable telos, as advanced by Tassin. In this sense, radical plural democracy takes the form of a 'promise' of a democracy to come, in the Derridian sense of the term.[13] Moreover, significant to this thesis, the tension between the liberal and democratic aspects of plural democracy reflects the tension between British parliamentary liberalism and Continental European republican democracy in the process of European integration, as examined in *Chapter 5*.

---

[11] Torfing, J (1999) Op. Cit. p. 258.
[12] Žižek, S (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (London: Verso). p. 6.
[13] Mouffe, C. (1994) 'For a Politics of a Nomadic Identity', in Robertson et al (eds) *Traveller's Tales*. (London: Routledge). pp. 111-12.

1.2. Radical *plural* democracy

Mouffe asserts that any democratic project must also accommodate pluralism:

> Pluralism, understood as the principle that individuals should have the possibility to organize their lives as they wish, to choose their own ends, and to realize them as they think best, is the great contribution of liberalism to modern society.[14]

Hence, 'pluralism' necessitates the abandonment of 'the dangerous dream of a perfect consensus, of a harmonious collective will' and consequently, the acceptance of 'the permanence of conflicts and antagonisms'.[15] By asserting that democracy should be plural, Mouffe upholds the traditional liberal notion that:

> ... the logic of democracy alone does not guarantee the defence of individual freedom and a respect for individual rights. It is only through the articulation with political liberalism that the logic of popular sovereignty can avoid becoming tyrannical; then one cannot speak of the people as if it was one homogenous and unified entity with a single general will.[16]

However, for Mouffe, liberalism ignores the intrinsic link between pluralism and social antagonism. This view is congruent with the 'democratic anti-liberalism' of Schmitt that describes liberal pluralism as characterized by endless conflicts between different opinions. Still, in Schmitt's terms, 'every religious, moral, ethical or other antithesis transforms into a political one if it is sufficiently strong to group human beings effectively according to friend and enemy'.[17]

Hence, pluralism entails politics and social antagonism, as disagreement between different concepts of the 'good will' divide people into friends and enemies.[18]This is overlooked by liberalism because its individualist conception of politics as the

---

[14] Mouffe, C (1990) Op. Cit. p. 58.
[15] Ibid. p. 59.
[16] Ibid. p. 60.
[17] Schmitt, C. (1976) [1927] *The Concept of the Political.* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press). p. 37.
[18] Mouffe, C. (1996) 'Deconstruction, Pragmatism and the Politics of Democracy', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*. (New York: Routledge). pp. 8-9.

rational pursuit of private interests 'annihilates the political as a domain of conquering power and repression'.[19] To accept the collective character of the political struggles facilitated by that pluralism, it is deemed necessary to abandon the ontological individualism of the liberal tradition, as predominant in Britain.

1.3. The anti-democratic offensive and the new social movements

Following Laclau and Mouffe, by articulating a new egalitarian ideal that is sensitive to present political struggles, a radical democratic interpretation of democratic citizenship could extend the principles of radical plural democracy to all spheres of European society. However, to become hegemonic, this project must successfully challenge the anti-democratic offensive that was initially formed in opposition to social democratic welfare statism. In direct contrast to Laclau and Mouffe's attempt to broaden plural democracy in pursuit of freedom and equality for all, the anti-democratic offensive has argued for the narrowing of plural democracy in defence of neo-liberal values such as individualism and free market economics.[20] As examined in *Chapter 5*, this anti-democratic offensive became particularly strong in Britain following the hegemonic success of the neo-liberal project of Thatcherism, and it was evidenced in its opposition to European political integration. However, as will now be illustrated, Laclau and Mouffe believe that liberal democracy has the necessary conditions for the development of democratic struggles that can combat such anti-democratic resistance.

Laclau and Mouffe's conception of a 'radical' and 'plural' democracy does not involve a rejection of the liberal democratic regime:

---

[19] Ibid. p. 71.
[20] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. pp. 171-5.

> The aim is not to create a completely different kind of society, but to use the symbolic resources of the liberal democratic tradition to struggle against relations of subordination not only in the economy but also those linked to gender, race, or sexual orientation, for example.[21]

Here, we arrive at the crucial aspect of radical plural democracy: its capacity to engender political struggles and unify them into a new hegemonic project for the European Left. This argument follows from the observation that hierarchical relations of subordination provide the necessary but not sufficient condition for the rise of political struggles against oppression. Relations of subordination are only transformed into sites of democratic antagonism when they are confronted with the liberal democratic quest for freedom and equality.[22]

Laclau and Mouffe observe that a proliferation of new social movements in the 1970s and 1980s was the result of the negation of the liberal-democratic ideology by new forms of subordination produced by the increasing commodification, bureaucratization and increasing homogenization of social life:

> One cannot understand the present expansion of the field of social conflictuality and the consequent emergence of new political subjects without situating both in the context of the commodification and bureaucratization (and homogenization) of social relations on the one hand, and the reformulation of liberal-democratic ideology - resulting from the expansion of struggles for equality - on the other. For this reason we have proposed that this proliferation of antagonisms and questioning of the relations of subordination should be considered as a moment of deepening of the democratic revolution.[23]

As argued in *Chapter 6*, we need to identity non-national hegemonic agents that can construct a European universal that does not reflect the particularisms of any single member state. These new social movements could be such *progressive* agents because they represent struggles that transcend national boundaries and

---

[21] Mouffe, C (1990) Op. Cit. pp. 57-8.
[22] Mouffe, C. (1988a) 'Hegemony and New Political Subjects: Towards a New Concept of Democracy', in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture.* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education). pp. 94-5.
[23] Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 163.

antagonisms. Moreover, they would provide a more democratic content for the European universal. Furthermore, in contrast to the present hegemony, they could be *successful* hegemonic agents because they represent struggles that reflect the growing proliferation of identifications and subject positions of contemporary Europe.

1.4. Democratic antagonisms

Laclau and Mouffe propose that the extension of the Democratic Revolution to still new areas of society will provide sufficient condition for the creation of democratic antagonism. However, it is emphasized that it does not predetermine how these democratic antagonisms are to be articulated. That is, they do not necessarily lead to democratic struggles. For example, they can be articulated with anti-democratic right-wing discourses.

Nevertheless, the project for a radical plural democracy provides a way of turning democratic antagonisms into a wide-ranging democratization of social life.[24] The primary task of the Left is to unify the different kinds of democratic struggles against sexism, racism, and new forms of subordination in the name of radical plural democracy. The problem is that these struggles do not spontaneously converge. To establish democratic equivalences, a new 'common sense' is necessary, which would 'transform the identity of different groups so that the demands of each group could be articulated with those of others according to the principle of democratic equivalence'.[25] The task is not to establish an alliance between dominant and subordinate agencies, but rather to produce a new

---

[24] Mouffe, C. (1988a) Op. Cit. p. 96.
[25] Mouffe, C. (1989) 'Radical Democracy: Modern or Postmodern?', in Ross (ed.) *Universal*

collective will that ensures that the interests of one group are not pursued at the expense of the interests of others.

Thus, the development of radical plural democracy in Europe requires the creation of a collective form of identification that constructs a 'we/us' through the expansion of a universal chain of equivalence between all those who struggle against 'illegitimate' forms of subordination.[26] Following Laclau and Mouffe, this collective will would represent the pursuit of the liberal democratic principles of 'freedom and equality for all'. By constructing such a democratic equivalence, a radical plural democracy could unify the broad range of new democratic struggles that transcend the national antagonisms of Europe. As will now be discussed, this pursuit of democracy without national antagonisms could be aided by the development of 'agonistic' democracy.

1.5. Agonistic pluralism

Mouffe argues that the liberal notion of a 'deliberative democracy' based upon political consensus is challenged by a surge in political conflicts.[27] For example, the forces that overthrew the Communist regimes in Russia and East Central Europe have become divided by ethnic, regional and religious antagonisms, and similar antagonisms have been surfacing in Western Europe since the loss of its Eastern 'radical otherness'.

At the same time, however, this growing plurality of antagonisms has not been reflected in an increase in plural democratic representation. Rather, in direct

---

Abandon? (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press). p. 42.

[26] Mouffe, C. (1992b). 'Citizenship and Political Identity', *October*, Volume 61, p. 31.

[27] See: Mouffe, C. (1994) Op. Cit. pp.105-7.

contrast, Mouffe observes that plural democracy has been threatened by a 'consensus at the centre' produced by the celebration of the 'end of the ideology', the 'demise of the Left', and the 'end of politics'. Moreover, as evident in contemporary Europe, this consensus has created a political vacuum that has facilitated the growth of the extreme right, such as Le Penn in France, who oppose the more plural and democratic interpretations of liberal democracy. The people of Europe feel that they can no longer tell the difference between the political parties who all claim to inhabit the centre. This is a frustrating experience in the light of such growing problems as unemployment and poor public services, and it is this frustration that fuels the popularity of the extreme right.

For Mouffe, in response to these observations, the belief in a consensus without conflicts must be abandoned:

> The prime task of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions, nor to relegate them to the private sphere in order to render rational consensus possible, but to mobilize these passions, and give them a democratic outlet.[28]

Following Mouffe, contemporary threats to plural democracy in Europe demand such a new confrontational politics. As Mouffe asserts, political forces with new political vocabularies are required which can construct new political frontiers in their attempt to solve the political problems of today:

> A healthy democratic process calls for a vibrant clash of political positions and an open conflict of interests. If such is missing, it can too easily be replaced by a confrontation between non-negotiable moral values and essentialist identities.[29]

For Mouffe, this threat is best challenged by an agonistic democracy rather than a deliberative democracy. As she explains, a deliberative democracy seeks a

---

[28] Ibid. p. 109.

[29] Mouffe, C. (1993a) 'Introduction: For an Agonistic Pluralism', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *The Return of the*

consensus through free and unrestrained public discussion, but agonistic democracy allows us to make room for a confrontation between adversaries who agree upon the 'liberal-democratic rules of the game' while disagreeing not only about substantial, political and moral issues but also about the precise interpretation of the rules of the game.[30]

Hence, in the process of European integration, we should not attempt to dissolve political conflicts and antagonisms between member states within a framework of a consensual, deliberative democracy. Rather, Europe should find a way for making such national antagonisms compatible with pluralist democracy by turning *antagonism* into *agonism*. As Torfing describes, this would be achieved by securing a political consensus on 'basic democratic values and procedures' *while allowing dissent over the interpretation of the precise meaning of these values and procedures* and their implications for our political choice between different ways of organizing society.[31]

For agonistic democracy, enemies would not be destroyed but turned into 'adversaries' whose politics we might disagree with, but whose existence would be legitimate and should be tolerated. Here, the limit for the agonistic inclusion of enemies as 'legitimate adversaries' would be those who apply 'anti-democratic' means in their attack on the basic democratic values and procedures.[32] As will now be examined, agonistic democracy could be combined with a 'nomadization'

Political. (London: Verso). p. 6.

[30] Mouffe, C. (1995) 'The End of Politics and the Rise of the Radical Right', *Dissent*, Fall, p. 502.

[31] Torfing, J. (1999). Op. Cit. p. 255.

[32] See: Mouffe, C. (1991a) 'Pluralism and Modern Democracy: Around Carl Schmitt', *New Formations*, Volume 14, Summer, pp. 1-16; Mouffe, C. (1993a) Op. Cit. pp. 1-8; Mouffe, C. (1996) Op. Cit; Schmitt, C. (1976) [1972] *The Concept of the Political*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), and Schmitt, C. (1985) [1923] *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*. (Baskerville: MIT Press).

and 'hybridization' of identity[33] that would contribute to the dissolution of antagonistic frontiers.

1.6. The nomadization and hybridization of identity

'Nomadization' is the attempt to undercut the allegiance of a particular identity to a certain nation, place or property, and thereby to show that all identities are constructed in and through hegemonic struggle. This will tend to naturalize social and political identities and make them more negotiable. Therefore, it could help dissolve the British public allegiance to national parliamentary sovereignty that has impeded British-European integration. In broader terms, it could undercut the ontological essentialization of the relation between being and a place that is a constitutive feature of the nationalism that has obstructed European supranational integration, as examined in *Chapter 5.*

'Hybridization' is the attempt to make people realize that their identity is multiple in the sense of constituting an 'overdetermined ensemble of identifications'.[34] For instance, as soon as British people perceive that they are not only 'British' but also women, gay, black, poor, 'Europeans', and/or rural dwellers, and so forth, their loyalties - and consequent passions - will be divided. Thus, hybridization can help us develop a supranational European identity because it helps dissolve the ontological essentialization between the subject and the nation by exposing that the national subject position is only one of many other equal positions.

---

[33] Mouffe, C. (1994) Op. Cit. pp. 110-11.
[34] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 255.

1.7. Associational democracy

The concept of democracy as 'agonistic pluralism' could help Europe overcome the dilemma about whether to advance a substantial definition of liberal democracy, and accept the implicit dangers implied by such a definition, or whether to opt for a strictly procedural definition of liberal democracy, and risk impoverishing the very concept of democracy.[35] A more substantial homogeneity is required in the EU because its democratic procedures are not sufficient for creating a political unity of its member states. For Mouffe, such procedures would have to be in strict accordance with the constitutive principles of liberal democracy.

The 'undecidability and indeterminacy' of these principles would provide plenty of room for disagreement over the precise form of the procedural forms of liberal democracy, and this is precisely what would stimulate the search for appropriate European democratic institutions. Following Mouffe, the importance of representative democracy rather than the illusions of direct democracy would guide this search.[36] However, as Mouffe argues, liberal democracy must be renewed to combat the shortcomings of representative democracy as evident, for example, at the national level in Britain and at the supranational level in Europe. To this end, Europe could implement the notion of an 'associational democracy' developed by Paul Hirst.[37]

---

[35] See: Mouffe, C. (1991a) Op. Cit. pp. 11-12.

[36] Mouffe, C. (1993c) 'On the Articulation Between Liberalism and Democracy', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *The Return of the Political*. (London: Verso). pp. 102-5.

[37] See, for example: Hirst, P. Q. (1994) *Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economic and Social Governance*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

For Hirst, associational democracy is the only challenge to corporate capitalism that respects the principles of liberal democracy.[38] As he emphasizes, associational democracy should be advanced only to renew traditional forms of liberal democracy. Following Hirst, representative democracy in Europe would not be abandoned, but supplemented by new forms of democratic institutions. Political parties would still have an important role in giving expression to cross-cutting forms of social division and political conflict. However, as Mouffe indicates, if these political parties did not successfully fulfil this role, a whole range of ethnic, religious, and nationalist movements could take over and possibly threaten the democratic creed of the community.[39]

The basic principle of associational democracy is the cooperative ownership of economic units under democratic management. In Europe, similar to Tassin's conception of a European political community, Mouffe argues that an associative democracy may help overcome national antagonisms and democratic deficits because it encourages the organization of social life in small unities and challenges hierarchy and administrative centralization. Indeed, both Tassin's European political community and Laclau and Mouffe's project of radical plural democracy support the federal politics of personalism that was developed by Dandieu, De Rougemont, and Mounier. As illustrated in *Chapter 4*, this federal approach is reflected in the Christian Democratic conception of subsidiarity.

The principles of decentralized, democratic governance upheld by associational democracy would imply the democratization of the public bodies that provide education, health, welfare and community services. In all, associational

---

[38] Mouffe, C. (1993c) Op. Cit. p. 98.
[39] See: Mouffe, C. (1993a) Op. Cit. p. 5.

democracy provides an important model for the democratization of both the private and public sphere, one which demands allowance of a multiplicity of democratically managed associations and communities. Thus, associational democracy does require a state. However, because it is involved in many forms of 'meta-governance', such a state should not be perceived as merely one association among others. Accordingly, a reflexive pluralist state is required whose legal task is to ensure equity between associations, police their conduct and protect the rights of both individuals and associations.[40]

In contrast to the British liberal-individualist conception, a crucial condition for associational democracy is the abandonment of the conception of the individual as an 'unencumbered self' that exists prior to, and independently of, social communities. Consequently, the conception of individuals as encumbered, multiple selves leads to a new understanding of social rights that does not perceive them as a property of the individual. Hence, 'it is through her inscription in specific social relations, rather than as an individual outside society, that a social agent is granted rights'.[41] Here, neither the individual nor the community possesses universal rights. Similar to the personalism and federalist politics of De Rougemont advanced by Tassin in *Chapter 6,* the individual has rights in and through the constitutive membership of a community. It is in this sense that social rights must be understood as collective rather than individual rights in Europe.

---

[40] Mouffe, C. (1993c) Op. Cit. p. 99.
[41] Ibid. p. 97.

2.0. A radical plural democratic citizenship for Europe?

Following Mouffe, there are three important reasons for examining the possibility of a radical (plural) democratic citizenship for Europe. First, the demand for the extension of rights, based upon an egalitarian notion of citizenship, would help the European left recover the 'radical impetus' that once brought down the ancient régime. Second, it would help defeat neo-liberalism and the anti-democratic offensive by reinvoking notions of community, civic virtue and active participation. Third, it provides a vital means in the struggle for a radical plural democracy.[42] Here, the first two reasons follow directly from the liberal and communitarian conceptions of democratic citizenship, but the third reason requires a reformulation of the notion of democratic citizenship that takes it beyond both liberalism and communitarianism. This reformulation provides another reason for a radical democratic citizenship: it would help us overcome the conflict between British liberal-individualism and Continental European communitarianism that has obstructed the process of European integration. Thus, our final task is to assess whether a radical democratic citizenship holds the key to the development of a universal and democratic European notion of citizenship.

2.2. The critique of the liberal conception of democratic citizenship

The liberal conception of democratic citizenship can mediate the tension between individualism and communitarian collectivism because it invokes a reference to both the individual and the community, and takes the rights of the individual to be dependent upon the community.[43] Although the individual is not constituted by the

---

[42] See: Mouffe, C. (1992a) Op. Cit. pp. 3-4.
[43] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 263.

community, he/she can only be a free and autonomous individual because of the presence of an *instrumental* community that can protect and extend his/her rights.

This liberal conception tends to privilege normatively 'rights' over 'obligations'. In all, the citizen is conceived as an individual bearer of universal rights. The law that is enforced by the state protects these rights. The constitutional rights of the individual are dependent upon the collective defence of these rights by the community.[44] However, although the individual is dependent upon the community, the latter is not conceived to be dependent upon the individual. Hence, in contrast to the ancient Greek conception explored by Tassin, there is no concern for the active participation of citizen in the development of civic virtues and common values. Thus, liberalism reduces democratic citizenship to a question of the legal status of the individual, and it conceives social cooperation only as a means of enhancing productive capacities and increasing individual prosperity. The absence of a common political obligation fosters a gradual weakening and impoverishment of the political community, which in turn may result in failure to secure the rights of the citizens and uphold the liberal democratic regime.[45] Therefore, the problem of the liberal conception (which affirms that there is no common good and that each individual should be able to define and seek to realize his/her own conception of the good) is that it runs the risk of *sacrificing the citizen to the individual*.[46]

---

[44] Ibid. p. 264.
[45] Ibid. p. 265.
[46] Mouffe, J. (1992b) Op. Cit. p. 29.

2.3. The critique of the communitarian conception of democratic citizenship

Mouffe believes that communitarian critics, such as MacIntyre, are right to emphasize the growing phenomenon of 'anomie' which seems to accompany the hegemonic forms of liberal individualism that are particularly evident in Britain.[47] It is acknowledged that we need to counter the atomistic individualism of the liberal tradition by emphasizing the active participation of the citizen in the development and defence of common norms and values. However, unlike Tassin, Mouffe rejects the communitarian conception of the common good associated with the republican communities in ancient Greece and medieval Europe. The problem is not so much that these European republican communities were highly undemocratic, but rather that the idea of a *substantive* community, based upon a comprehensive conception of the common good, creates an organic ('Gemeinschaft') community that is incompatible with the pluralism which should be a constitutive component of European democracy. Therefore, in contrast to the liberal conception, the communitarian critique of liberal theory tends to *sacrifice the individual to the citizen.*[48]

2.4. A radical reformulation of liberalism and communitarianism

Hence, the crucial question for Europe is how to conceptualize a democratic citizenship that does not sacrifice the citizen to the individual or vice versa. Following Mouffe, the attempt to answer this question must begin by seeking to develop a conception of a European political community that is compatible with

---

[47] See: MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After Virtue*: *A Study in Moral Theory*. (London: Duckworth).
[48] Mouffe, J. (1992b) Op. Cit. p. 29.

the plural democracy. That is, we should aim to envisage a form of communality that respects diversity and makes room for different forms of individuality.[49] Thus, we must create a synthesis of liberal individualism and republican communitarianism. Moreover, as argued above, such a synthesis would help us resolve the conflict between British and Continental European (political and governmental hegemonic) discourse that obstructs the possibility of a universal European identity.

Unlike Berlin[50], Mouffe holds that the liberal celebration of the negative freedom of individuals is compatible with the existence of a political community that is more than a protective shell of individual rights. Here, Mouffe looks to Skinner[51] who rediscovers the Machiavellian classical republican proposition that reconciles virtuous public service with negative freedom.[52] Machiavelli argues that a free state is the primary condition for ensuring the negative freedom of the citizen. A state can only be free if it avoids external servitude and governs itself according to its own will. In terms of constitution, such a free state must have the form of a 'res publica'.

In accordance with neo-realism and intergovernmentalism, such a Machiavellian conception reflects the British opposition to European integration in its defence of the freedom of the British state to govern itself according to its own national interest. Britain as a 'free state' is the primary condition for ensuring the negative freedom of the individual *Subject*. However, it could provide the basis of a new

---

[49] Ibid. p. 30.
[50] See: Berlin, I. (1975) [1969] *Four Essays on Liberty*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
[51] See: Skinner, Q. (1991) 'The Paradoxes of Political Liberty', in Miller (ed.) *Liberty*. (Oxford University Press). pp. 183-205.
[52] Ibid. pp. 194-5.

European identity if was developed at the supranational rather than the national level.

Although Machiavelli proposes that free states are the primary condition for ensuring the negative freedom of the individual, he emphasizes that self-governing republics can only be maintained if their citizens cultivate civic virtue through active participation in government and in the common norms and values.[53] Hence, to ensure liberty, and avoid the servitude that makes it impossible, Europe would have to commit itself to the pursuit of the 'common good'.[54] That is, common political obligation is perfectly compatible with individual liberty in the negative sense of the absence of constraint and thus, of freedom to pursue one's own chosen ends.[55]

2.5. Beyond liberalism and communitarianism

A synthesis of liberal pluralism and the communitarian emphasis upon the constitutive character of the political community requires a substantial reworking of both liberal and communitarian/civic republican traditions.[56] With regard to liberalism, it must be affirmed that individual rights can be defended within a politically constructed European political community. In relation to communitarianism, it must be affirmed that the European political community can be redefined in terms of 'what we can call, following Wittgenstein, a "grammar of conduct" that coincides with the allegiance to the constitutive ethico-political

---

[53] Ibid. pp. 197.
[54] See also: Mouffe, C. (1988b) 'The Civics Lesson', *New Statesman and Society*, No. 7. p. 30.
[55] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 266.
[56] Ibid.

principles of modern democracy'.[57] This move beyond both liberalism and communitarianism will now be examined in so far as it is significant to the development of a universal radical democratic citizenship in Europe.

2.5.1. Beyond liberalism

Although Rawls[58] challenges the propositions of more extreme libertarians, such as Hayek and Nozick, he maintains the liberal priority of the right over any conception of the common good.[59] Following Sandel's communitarian critique of Rawls, Mouffe argues that he fails to convincingly justify this priority.[60] As Mouffe explains, this priority cannot be justified independently of a particular political community since it is 'only through our participation in a community that defines the good that we can have a sense of the right and a conception of justice'.[61]

Yet Mouffe argues that this critique of Rawls does not affirm the communitarian priority of the common good over the liberal priority of defending rights. As Mouffe explains, rather than rejecting the conception of justice as the primary virtue of society, we should accept that the right over the good is only possible within a particular community which is defined by the constitutive political common good it puts to work, such as the principles of 'freedom and equality for all'.[62]

In all, we should accept Rawl's defence of pluralism and individual rights, but we should reject his proposition that such requires the abandonment of any notion of

---

[57] Mouffe, C. (1992b) Op. Cit. p. 30.
[58] See: Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University).
[59] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 267.
[60] Mouffe, C. (1988c) 'American Liberalism and its Critics: Rawls, Taylor, Sandel and Waltzer', *Praxis International*, Volume 8, No. 3, p. 199.
[61] Ibid.

a common good. A clear distinction must be made between the 'political common good', which justifies the priority of rights, and the 'common *moral* good', which is claimed to be secondary to pluralism and the defence of rights.[63] Here, the 'political common good' is defined by a 'collective will' at the level of the regime, whereas the 'common *moral* good' is defined by a multiplicity of singular wills.[64]

Although Rawls later moves in this direction[65], he fails to provide an adequate explanation of the political in the sense of 'politeia', and he does not account for the role of politics in the form of hegemony and social antagonism.[66] Rawls accepts that the formulation of the principles of justice must start from the basic values of freedom and equality, but he tends to conceive these values as self-evident and uncontroversial. By contrast, a discourse-theoretical approach emphasizes that freedom and equality are sedimented values, which in the last instance are the result of a political decision taken in the undecidable terrain. Thus, these values are contingent and invariably involve the exclusion of the alternative values of both the 'adversaries', who are tolerated, and the 'enemies', who are not.

The reworking of the liberal conception of democratic citizenship requires an emphatic insistence on the role of a particular hegemonic form of political community for sustaining the rights of individuals.[67] It is because the political

---

[62] Mouffe, C. (1987) Op. Cit. pp. 110-11.
[63] Mouffe, C. (1988c) Op. Cit. p. 199.
[64] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 267.
[65] See: Rawls, J. (1985) 'Justice as Fairness: Political and Metaphysical', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Volume 14, No. 3, Summer, pp. 223-51; Rawls, J. (1987) 'The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, Volume 7, No. 1, Spring, pp. 1-25; Rawls, J. (1993) *Political Liberalism*. (New York: Columbia University Press),
[66] See: Mouffe, C. (1987) Op. Cit. p. 113.
[67] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 268.

community is founded on a particular 'political common good' that democratic citizens have the rights that they have. For the people of Europe to enjoy these rights, they must actively engage in European-wide communal activities and political struggles that re-enact the political common good. For example, they could participate in European public forums for political debate, as well as NGOs, civil associations, interests groups and social movements that transcend national boundaries and represent their non-national interests, rights and concerns.[68] They could also become actively involved in European-wide public demonstrations, petitioning and lobbying.[69]

2.5.2. Beyond communitarianism

Communitarians claim that the problem with the liberal conception of democratic citizenship is that it only allows for an instrumental community. It is held that such a 'thin' conception of community will lead to an impoverishment of the notion of citizenship. In contrast, a 'thick' ('Gemeinschaft') community is proposed that constitutes individuals as active members of an organic community around a substantive conception of the common good.[70]

The problem with such a 'thick' conception of a European political community would be that its pre-modern ideal of an all-embracing substantive unity is potentially totalitarian and incompatible with liberal pluralism. However, Mouffe proposes that the totalitarian implications of the communitarian conception of

---

[68] See: Tilly, C. (1986) *Contentious France*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).

[69] See: Kohler-Kochm, B. (1997) 'Organizing Interests in European Integration: The Evolution of a New Type of Governance?', in: H. Wallace and R. A. Young (eds) *Participation and Policy-Making in the European Union*. (Oxford: Clarendon). pp. 42-68.

[70] Mouffe, C. (1991b) 'Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community', in The Miami Theory Collective (ed.) *Community at Loose Ends*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press). p. 71.

community can be removed without losing the emphasis upon the constitutive character of the community. This is made possible if the different member states of the EU adopt the universal notion that 'what makes us fellow citizens in a liberal democratic regime is not a substantive idea of the good but a set of political principles specific to such a tradition: the principles of freedom and equality for all'.[71] Following Wittgenstein, such principles constitute a 'grammar of conduct', and it is the acceptance of the ethico-political principles embodied in this grammar of conduct that can constitute the people of the different member states of the EU as fellow European citizens with both universal European rights and obligations.

However, this thesis has emphasized that British-European integration has been obstructed precisely because Britain and Continental Europe have different 'grammars of conduct'. The political principles of 'freedom and equality for all' are specific to the Continental European discourse of liberal democracy that conflicts with the British discourse of liberal individualism. Again, this discourse-theoretical approach claims that such a universal grammar of conduct can be achieved through hegemonic struggle and the construction of a new universal constitutive outside.

Furthermore, the conceptualization of a European political community in terms of a certain grammar of conduct would re-establish the lost connection between ethics and politics.[72] Such a reconnection would be good for Europe because it would help overcome the moral vacuum of liberal politics that tends to undermine the social cohesion of democratic societies. It would also be particularly good for Britain because its hegemonic discourse of parliamentary liberalism has deprived

---

[71] Ibid. p. 75.
[72] Ibid. pp. 75-6.

it of an ethical tradition. Furthermore, it would help British-European integration because the moral vacuum of Britain's liberal discourse is reflected in its fierce resistance to the social dimension of European integration.

Indeed, as particularly evident in Britain, liberalism deprives politics of its ethical components because it relegates normative concerns to the private sphere of morals and religion, and because the instrumental community of mutual interests does not foster any principles for the ethical guidance of civic activities. However, the attempt to re-establish the connection between politics and ethics should not aim to revive the pre-modern *fusion* of politics and ethics. That is, the solution to the problem of how to reconnect ethics and politics seems to rest upon the distinction between a '*moral* common good' and a '*ethical-political* common good', in that the EU should not aim to subordinate politics to the moral values specified by the common good. Rather, it should emphasize the role of the grammar of conduct whose ethical-political principles cannot be derived from any comprehensive moral values.[73]

The notion of a ethic-political grammar of conduct is provided by the British conservative philosophy of Oakeshott.[74] His conception of 'societas' (or 'res publica') as a constitutive community of ethico-political principles goes beyond both the liberal conception of an instrumental community defined by the rule of law and the communitarian conception of a substantive community defined by the common good.[75] However, two interrelated problems still remain. The first reflects the aforementioned problem relating to the content of a grammar of conduct. The conservative content of Oakeshott's res publica is compatible with British liberal

---

[73] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 269.

individualism but it is incompatible with the liberal democratic discourse of Continental Europe, and thus, with the political initiatives for European integration.

Following Mouffe, this problem can be resolved by redefining the content of the res publica with the ethico-political and liberal democratic principles of 'freedom and equality for all'. The people of Europe may be engaged in different purposive enterprises and hold different conceptions of the good, but what could bind them together as citizens within the res publica could be their *submission* to a radical interpretation of the principles of freedom and equality. In this interpretation, citizenship becomes neither one identity among others (reflecting the British, liberal and neo-realist conceptions of European intergovernmentalism), nor the dominant overriding identity (reflecting the Continental European, communitarian and neo-functional conceptions of European supranationalism). Rather, citizenship is a *social imaginary* that affects all the different subject positions of social and political agents.[76]

The second problem concerns the conception of politics employed by Oakeshott.[77] For Oakeshott, politics takes place within the shared language of civility, which defines the 'we/us' of the res publica. He has no conception of politics as hegemonic struggles over the constitution of the political community, which involves the construction of a 'we/us' and the positing of a 'they/them/the Other', whether in the form of an adversary or an enemy. Hence, he cannot account for the above attempt to redefine the content of the res publica through hegemonic struggles.

---

[74] See: Oakeshott, M. (1975) *On Human Conduct*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press); Mouffe, C. (1991b) Op. Cit. pp. 70-82; Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. pp. 269-71.
[75] Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 270.
[76] Mouffe, C. (1991b) Op. Cit. p. 79.
[77] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 270.

Hence, the second problem introduces the significance of hegemony. It is through hegemonic struggle that the EU would submit to a radical interpretation of the principles of freedom and equality, and thus, be introduced to a new social imaginary of citizenship. Yet, this second problem also introduces the significance of social antagonism. As indicated by Moufffe, the constitution of a European political community or res publica that includes both Britain and Continental Europe would involve the construction of a new 'we/us' and the positing of a new 'they/them/the Other' (whether in the form of an adversary or an enemy). The content of this new and universal European res publica would have to be defined through hegemonic struggles at the supranational level.

In sum, by introducing hegemony and social antagonism into the arguments of Oakeshott, and thereby changing the content of the ethico-political principles of his res publica, a conception of European democratic citizenship can be developed in which citizenship becomes a matter of adhering to ethico-political principles defined by a politically constructed European political community. It can thus be concluded that *the European community is constitutive of European citizenship*.

Such a discourse-theoretical conception of a European community would not represent a liberal-instrumental nor a communitarian-substantive conception. Rather, it would be a *social imaginary* that defines a European political common good, shaped in and through exclusionary hegemonic struggles. In other words, the European political community should *not* be conceived as an empirical referent, that is, as a group of people unified by the presence of a mechanical or organic community. Rather, it should be conceived as a discursive surface of

inscription that permits the construction of a universal political identification by advancing a particular conceptualization of the empty signifier (or nodal point) of the political common good.[78] Here, European democratic citizens would neither be mere bearers of universal European rights, nor servants of a European state governed by a substantive conception of the common good. Rather, the European democratic citizenship would be a:

> ... common political identity of persons who might be involved in many different communities and who have differing conceptions of the good, but who accept submission to certain authoritative rules of conduct.[79]

These European democratic citizens would take an active role in the interpretation and constant re-enactment of the universal rules of conduct and correlative ethico-principles which, rather than prescribing a substantive consensus, would function as a kind of 'vanishing point' around which a radical plural democracy in Europe would be organized.[80]

2.6. The tension between public and private spheres

As explained above, a radical democratic citizenship would challenge illegitimate subordination in all social spheres of Europe. However, this would not mean that the private sphere would be eradicated because it is invaded by public concerns of freedom and equality. The distinction between private and public can be maintained as a distinction between individual and citizen.[81] Our wants, choices and decisions are private because they are our own individual responsibility, but our performances are public because they must subscribe to the conditions and principles specified by our European democratic citizenship:

---

[78] Mouffe, C. (1992b) Op. Cit. p. 30.
[79] Ibid. pp. 30-1.
[80] See: Torfing, J. (1999) Op. Cit. p. 271.

> The identities qua individual and qua citizen are preserved, and non is sacrificed to the other; they coexist in a permanent tension that can be never be reconciled.[82]

Thus, the project of a radical plural democracy and citizenship aims to reformulate, rather than reject, the distinction between the public and private. It follows that, in Europe, we would all live in a state of permanent tension between our private identity as different individuals and our public identity as equivalential European citizens. Here, it would be only when our acts and values had direct consequences for our common social hopes and living conditions that we could be held responsible as radical democratic citizens.[83]

3.0. The credibility of a radical plural democracy for Europe

As will now be discussed, there are various limitations for the application of radical plural democracy to the question of developing a democratic and universal European identity.[84] First, there is the problem posed by Mouffe's plural democratic proposition that we should preserve the different interpretations of the same principles, that is, the different signifieds of signifiers. As explained above, democracy as agonistic pluralism would give a democratic outlet to political

---

[81] Mouffe, C. (1992b). Op. Cit. p. 32.
[82] Ibid.
[83] See: Mouffe, C. (1991b) Op. Cit. p. 81.
[84] For a broader discussion of the theoretical problems for discourse theory invoked by the pursuit of a radical plural democracy, as well as their possible resolution, see for example: Critchley, S. (1998) 'Metaphysics in the Dark', *Political Theory*, Volume 26, No. 6, pp. 803-17; Critchley, S. (1992) *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*. (Oxford: Blackwell); Howarth, D. (1996) 'Ideology, Hegemony and Political Subjectivity, in I. Hampsher-Monk and J. Stanyer (eds) *Contemporary Political Studies 1996*, Volume 2, pp. 951-4; Norval, A. J. (2000) 'Trajectories of Future Research in Discourse Theory' in Howarth, D., A. J. Norval and Y. Stavrakakis (eds) *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change*. (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press). p. 231; Townsend, J. (2003) 'Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: A New Paradigm from the Essex School?', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Volume 5, No. 1, February, pp. 137-41, and Butler, J., E. Laclau and S. Žižek (2000) *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. (London: Verso). pp. 80-1, 295.

conflicts rather than seeking to eliminate them.[85] This would be achieved by securing a political consensus on basic democratic values and procedures while allowing dissent over the intepretation of their precise meaning and their implications for our political choice between different ways of organizing society. The limit for the agonistic inclusion of 'enemies' as 'legitimate adversaries' would be those who apply 'anti-democratic' means in their attack on these democratic values and procedures.

However, in contrast to Mouffe's propositions, this thesis argues that it is not enough to simply secure this consensus. That is, we cannot allow dissent over the precise intepretation of these basic democratic values and procedures. If there is such disagreement, then there is no basic political consensus. As *Chapter 4* illustrated, it is precisely such different interpretations of the same principles that *obstructs* the possibility of political consensus and progress towards a common identity and citizenship. Indeed, such a conception of democracy as agonistic pluralism seems to reflect the status quo in Europe. At present, the EU represents intergovernmental cooperation between conflicting nation states with a common commitment to subsidiarity and 'an ever closer union'. However, as *Chapter 4* emphasized, if there is disagreement over the precise meaning of such key principles, then there is no agreement or progress towards an integrated Europe.

As was argued in *Chapter 4*, what Europe requires is a *common* political vocabulary so that agreement *signifies* agreement. The existing multitude of floating signifiers need to be structured into a unified European discourse through the intervention of a 'nodal point' which stops their sliding and fixes their

---

[85] Mouffe, C. (1994) Op. Cit. p. 109.

meaning.[86] As *Chapter 4* of this thesis illustrates, 'subsidiarity', 'federalism' and 'European Union' are floating signifiers because they are overflowed with meaning as they are articulated differently within the different discourses of the member states of the EU. Similar to these principles, concepts of 'liberty' and 'democracy', and thus, 'freedom and equality', are floating signifiers because they are also articulated differently within these conflicting discursive systems of identity. Thus, what is needed is a nodal point, an 'empty signifier' that can fix the content of these key floating signifiers by articulating them within a universal chain of equivalence.[87] Following Mouffe's own propositions, by quilting floating signifiers (such as, European union, democracy, subsidiarity, freedom and equality, and so) through the nodal points of 'radical democratic citizenship' and 'radical plural democracy', we can determine a radical democratic chain of meaning, and thus, a universal content for a European constitutive common good. Hence, we arrive at the conception of a *politically defined and universal European community that is constitutive of a European citizenship*.

As *Chapter 4* also illustrated, the process of European integration reflects a hegemonic struggle over the meaning of these key floating signifiers. There is a political battle between British liberal-individualism and Continental European liberal democracy' over which shall determine their meaning. By moving beyond both liberalism and communitarianism, a radical democratic citizenship could help overcome this conflict. Until then, the conflict over the meaning of these key principles raises the question of who will, or who should, decide upon which interpretation is implemented in practice?

---

[86] See: Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) Op. Cit. p. 112; Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 87.
[87] Žižek, S. (1989) Op. Cit. p. 97.

Moreover, it is clearly unhelpful to simply demand that what are perceived 'anti-democratic' movements should stick to democratic rules of the game and commit themselves to such basic democratic values. Indeed, who decides what values and procedures are democratic in the first place, and thus, who is to be perceived as a legitimate adversary or an anti-democratic enemy? Such demands and decisions could lead to the totalitarian nightmare that we are trying to avoid, and they raise the question of who has the authority to make them? As examined below, the concept of hegemony may help answer these questions, but it does not ensure the prevention of what may be perceived as 'undemocratic' means in enforcing these 'democratic' rules of the game and their interpretation. If these decisions are decided by hegemonic struggle, then it is also likely that the ruling values of Western European capitalism will survive. Thus, no genuine progress towards 'an ever closer union' would be achieved because any alternative values and procedures may be perceived by the ruling hegemony force as 'anti-democratic' and thus, subordinate potential agents of change may be constructed as 'enemies' rather than 'legitimate adversaries' - and treated as such.

It is ethnocentric and undemocratic to demand that others should stick to Mouffe's democratic rules and values. Indeed, despite her own anti-essentialist critique of the ethnoscentrism of modernity, it can be argued that her 'rules of the game' are Eurocentric because they privilege a Western European interpretation of liberal democracy. Such Eurocentrism is particularly unhelpful in the pursuit of British-European integration because Britain is outside this Western European tradition. As emphasized in *Chapter 5*, Britain *opposes* this liberal democratic tradition because it represents its constitutive outside. To elucidate, Continental Europe (and thus, the EU) has been consistently constructed as an 'antagonistic enemy'

rather than a ‘legitimate adversary’ of Britain. That is, for the British (discursive system of) identity, Continental Europe is outside the limit for the inclusion of 'enemies' as 'legitimate adversaries'. Indeed, as we have seen, the limits of the British identity have been constructed in opposition to Continental Europe (and thus, the EU) as its radical (and threatening) otherness (or constitutive outside). That is, it involved the construction of a social antagonism.

As *Chapter 5* also illustrated, this antagonism reflects a difference in discourse between Britain and Continental Europe, which is reflected in the different interpretations of basic democratic values and procedures, as was demonstrated in *Chapter 4*. Therefore, rather than helping us find new ways of achieving universal agreement or consensus, Mouffe's conception of an agonistic democracy would only reinforce existing antagonisms between Britain and Continental Europe, and the problems this creates for supranational decision-making. Indeed, as indicated by *Parts I-II* of this thesis, it can be safely assumed that Britain would oppose these conflicting and 'alien' democratic authoritative rules of conduct, and thus, the question still remains of how to invoke such radical democratic change in Britain. Moreover, although the nomadization and hybridization of identity may contribute to the dissolution of antagonistic frontiers without invoking these problems, there is still the difficulty of how to implement them in practice.

There are similar problems with Mouffe's conception of a radical plural democratic citizenship. For example, to challenge the anti-democratic offensive, a radical democratic citizenship would create a collective identity between all those struggling against ‘illegitimate’ forms of subordination. Following Mouffe, this

citizenship would be constructed by a universal submission to a radical interpretation of the principles of 'freedom and equality for all' that would be embodied in a ethico-political grammar of conduct. As Mouffe claims, this radical democratic citizenship would challenge all illegitimate subordination because it is a *fact* that no sphere is immune from the principles of freedom and equality.

However, in accordance with Mouffe's own propositions, what is considered to be 'illegitimate subordination' will vary between different discursive systems of identities. Similarly, different interpretations of Mouffe's grammar of conduct would equal no progress towards a common European identity. The constitutive principles of 'freedom and equality for all' can be interpreted in many different ways, and they are interpreted differently by the conflicting discourses of Britain and Continental Europe. Indeed, the principles of 'freedom and equality for all' are particular to the Continental European discourse of liberal democracy that conflicts with the British discourse of liberal individualism. In this sense, Mouffe's propositions can be considered as Eurocentric because they privilege Western European principles and interpretations. Indeed, although no system may be immune to a radical interpretation of these principles, on what grounds can they be advanced as superior to others, such as those supported in Britain? How can British agents be persuaded to submit to these *different* rather than *superior* principles? As was argued, the relative success of the anti-democratic offensive in Britain has meant that it does not have the required democratic struggles to invoke such political change from within. With this in mind, can a hegemonic struggle at the supranational level really invoke such a significant change in British discourse?

Therefore, Mouffe's a democratic grammar of conduct produces exactly the same problems as the intepretation of the 'liberal-democratic rules of the game' in Mouffe's agonistic democracy. As this thesis emphasized in *Chapter 4*, British-European integration has been obstructed precisely because Britain and Continental Europe have different 'grammars of conduct' and different interpretations of the same principles. Hence, without a universal grammar of conduct, there can be no genuine progress towards an 'ever closer union'.

Furthermore, as for the modernist approaches to British-European integration examined by this thesis, as well as Tassin's Europe of the Mind', the second problem is that a radical plural democracy and citizenship reinforces the problems caused by Eurocentrism. Similar to Tassin, Laclau and Mouffe are critical of the national basis of Western European modernist discourse that limits its conceptions of democracy, community and citizenship. However, in contrast to Tassin's exploration of an ancient Platonic discourse that is *outside* the discourse of modernity, Laclau and Mouffe propose a radical deepening and expanding of the democratic revolution that was initiated *within* the existing discourse of modernity. Yet, although these projects represent different theoretical discourses, they are similar in the sense that they both represent Western European theoretical traditions. Moreover, similar to Tassin's 'Europe of the Mind', and despite their own critique of the ethnocentric universalism of modernity, Laclau and Mouffe's project of radical plural democracy is Eurocentric because it also privileges Western European ideas and values. It privileges 'democratic rules of the game and ethico-political principles that are specific to the Western European discourse of liberal democracy. As argued in *Chapter 6, Section 3.1*, in the absence of universal truths, there is no reason why others should accept this

position. Indeed, it is unhelpful to argue that the Britain Government should accept the privileged status of Continental European ideas and values. In direct contrast, British Eurosceptics have argued that we should oppose European integration to protect our superior British traditions.

Crucial to the hypotheses of this thesis, Britain is not only outside the limits of Western European discourses, but they represent the radical otherness for its discursive system of identity. Indeed, it is precisely the British resistance to these Western European discourses that is reflected in its contemporary opposition to European political integration. With regard to the project of radical plural democracy, for example, *Chapter 5* observed that the political principles embodied in Continental European initiatives for European integration can be traced back to the Democratic Revolution tradition that was initiated *within* the Continental European discourse of modernity.

In all, the Eurocentric projects of Tassin and Laclau and Mouffe would certainly be conceived as *credible* for the development of an exclusively Continental European political community: Tassin would re-establish the 'Europe of the Mind' and Laclau and Mouffe advance a radical interpretation of the liberal democratic principles that were initiated within the Continental European discourse of modernity. Moreover, these federal and 'bottom-up' democratic principles are congruent with a conception of a process of supranational integration. However, such projects would not help an integration process that included Britain. Since these projects reflect Continental European political traditions that represent Britain's radical otherness, Britain would remain outside the constitutive limits of the European system of identity. Indeed, as for the modernist approaches to British-European

integration examined by this thesis, these projects would be part of the problem rather than part of the solution because they would reinforce rather than resolve the existing British antagonism with Continental Europe.

The third problem concerns Mouffe's conception of an 'associational democracy'. This concept of democracy requires the rejection of the individual as an 'unencumbered self' that exists prior to, and independently of, social communities. Rather, individual rights would be established in and through the constitutive membership of a community. However, as for the projects of De Rougemont and Tassin in *Chapter 6*, it is such a British abstract conception of the individual as an 'uncumbered self' that conflicts with the Continental European 'collectivist' conception of the 'social located' individual, as developed by Locke and Rousseau respectively (and explained in *Chapter 4, Section 1.6.1*). It is precisely this abstract liberal conception which explains why Britain cannot comprehend the notion of 'collective social rights', and thus, that prevents it from understanding or accepting 'constitutive membership' of a European community. Thus, the crucial question still remains of how to dissolve this obstructing British hegemonic conception of liberalism.

Finally, there is the practical problem of how to invoke such radical plural democratic changes in Britain. Indeed, despite Preston's conclusion that we need to search for *external* agents of democratic change, it seems unlikely that Britain will allow any such change to emanate from Europe. As argued in *Chapter 5*, it was precisely because Continental Europe was identified as a predominant external force of interference that led to its construction as Britain's radical otherness in the first place. As reflected in their resistance to the Democratic

Revolution and the current process of European political integration, British hegemonic forces have successfully opposed such interference by constructing Europe (and thus, the EU) as a threat to order and stability, and therefore, as an enemy of the British nation. Moreover, as argued in *Chapter 5* and by Preston et al in *Chapter 2*, it is apparent that Britain has successfully obstructed democratic change from non-European external forces.

This is a pesisimistic picture, especially if we consider that Preston's search for external agents was guided by his initial conclusion that Britain lacked any potential *internal* agents that could invoke democratic change from within. Indeed, as *Chapter 5* observed, British hegemonic forces have resisted the development of effective internal democratic struggles. In accordance with Laclau and Mouffe's observations, Britain has experienced the commodification, bureaucratization and homogenization of social relations, but *not* the described reformulation of liberal-democratic ideology resulting from an expansion of struggles for equality. As indicated in *Chapter 5*, such a 'questioning of the relations of subordination' is absent in Britain because hegemonic forces have created a largely passive population which either (at least tacitly) accepts that British government represents the public interest, or is little motivated to actively challenge that notion. Hence, such struggles can only exist within parliament but not outside it at the level of the social. In sum, similar to Preston et al, this thesis observes that Britain has successfully resisted both internal and external forces of democratic change.

Furthermore, it is precisely because Britain has constructed the Continental European democratic tradition as its constitutive outside that explains why it does

not have the necessary internal agents for democratic change, and thus, the necessary conditions for a radical plural democracy. As illustrated, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the extension of the Democratic Revolution will provide sufficient condition for the creation of democratic antagonisms, and radical plural democracy provides a way of turning these democratic antagonisms into democratic struggles directed towards a wide-ranging democratization of social life. A proliferation of new social movements are identified as such potential agents of democratic change. However, the relative success of the British anti-democratic offensive has prevented the development of the democratic antagonisms that could become such democratic struggles. Indeed, the success of the British anti-democratic offensive is precisely what has prevented such a proliferation of new social movements. Consequently, Britain would remain outside the constitutive limits of the European discursive system of identity that would be constructed by a democratic equivalence between these new social movements in pursuit of a radical plural democracy and citizenship.

The British anti-democratic offensive has obstructed the development of the Democratic Revolution, and thus, the democratic rules and procedures, and the ethico-political principles of 'freedom and equality for all', in the same way (and for the same reasons) as they have obstructed the process of European political integration. It is this same anti-democratic resistance that has obstructed these external democratic forces that has obstructed the emergence of internal democratic principles and struggles.

Of course, and as emphasized by a discourse-theoretical approach, it is certainly possible that new internal or external agents of change will develop. The electoral

defeat of the Conservative Party by New Labour may pave the way to such internal change from the 'top down'. For example, at the European Council meeting on 19-20 June 2003, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, expressed his support for a European constitution[88], and he has also argued that Euroscepticism was an 'out of date delusion'.[89] Similarly, the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, said it was a matter of 'positive patriotism' that Britain should pursue a strong relationship with its European partners by taking a full part in the creation of this constitution.[90] In addition, the Liberal Democrats have demonstrated a positive commitment to European integration in consecutive manifestos.[91]

However, as this thesis has demonstrated in relation to John Major's attempt to put Britain in the 'heart of Europe', the Europhile position by the present British leadership does not necessarily reflect the majority position of British Government and Parliament, and thus, it will not necessarily lead to a more positive approach to European integration. Moreover, reflecting Britain traditional intergovernmental position, Jack Straw predicted that the final document would further entrench the role of nation states as the driving force behind the EU.[92] Furthermore, reflecting John Major's self-declared victory over of TEU, as examined in *Chapter 4*, the publication of this draft constitution on Monday 26 May was spun by the Labour

---

[88] See, for example: Blair, T. (2003a) 'Anti-Europeanism is an Out of Date Delusion', *Speech by Prime Minister Tony Blair on the future of the European Union*, Warsaw, Poland, Friday 30 May, http://www.labour.org.uk/warsaweurope; Blair, T. (2003b) *Prime Minister's Statement on European Council Meeting in Greece on 19 and 20 June*, Monday 23 June, http://www.labour.org.uk/pmtbeuropeancouncil.)

[89] Blair, T. (2003a) Op. Cit.

[90] See, for example: *The Guardian* (2003b) *EU Constitution 'No Threat to UK Identity*, Press Association, Wednesday 18 June, http://politics.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,9061,980035,00.html

[91] See, for example, the Liberal Democrat federal manifesto for the 2001 General Election. *Britain's Role in the European Union: Your say in Europe*. Uploaded 9 August 2001, http://www.libdems.org.uk/index.cfm/page.folders/section.policy/folder.manifestos

[92] *The Guardian* (2003b) Op Cit.

Government as a victory for omitting the word 'federal'.[93] In addition, similar to the Conservative Government's rejection of the Social Charter and the Social Chapter of the TEU, proposals within this draft constitution include a legally binding charter of fundamental rights that has been opposed by the British leadership.[94] Also, with regard to the Liberal Democrats, the British plural electoral system and the two-party system of government have undermined their position of power.

Nevertheless, in the absence of hegemonic agents of democratic change, it is still remains possible for a new European universal identity to be constructed by identifying a new universal radical otherness. As observed in *Chapter 3* and *Chapter 5*, such a universal chain of equivalence was invoked by the discursive effects of the external threat of Nazism that confronted the allied powers during the Second World War. Faced with a common enemy, the allied British and European national governments emphasized their common commitment to peace, freedom and democracy. However, these common values were emptied to the degree that they became empty signifiers; merely symbolizing a European communitarian space deprived of its fullness due to the presence of the evil forces of Nazism. Similarly, the excluded elements that were considered to represent Nazism were emptied to the point that could only be defined as a threat to Europe. That is, they represented 'anti-Europe'. Thus, it may take such a large external threat to develop a universal European identity and a universal commitment to democratic principles. In the absence of such a threat, it is probable that Britain will continue to obstruct the development of anything more than only a thin European identity in pursuit of a commonality that represents a

---

93 *The Guardian* (2003a) *EU Convention to unveil Charter of Rights*, Matthew Tempest and agencies, 10.45am update Tuesday, 27 May.
http://politics.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,9061,964182,00.html

global capitalist economic interests. That is, unless the British obstruction is removed, it is unlikely that economic integration will lead to the constitution of a thick European Community, as predicted by Preston and the 'spill-over' logic of neo-functionalism.

4.0. Practical implications

Finally, we now turn to the practical implications of the theoretical arguments for a radical plural democracy. This chapter has argued that the development of a European political community requires the construction of a constitutive supranational citizenship that requires the active participation of its citizens. As citizens of this community, they must participate in the development of a supranational political-ethico common good that provides and defends their common civic rights. They must also be able to actively engage in the constant re-enactments of this common good. It is only through such active and constant participation that citizens will achieve a sense of the right, a conception of justice, and a feeling of belonging.

However, as *Chapter 6* observed, such active participation has not been successfully encouraged from the top-down and it has not evolved from the bottom-up. To help encourage such citizen participation, there are four demands on European identity formation that must be met. First, the EU must make the people feel that voting in European elections is a citizen obligation and not just a cost-benefit calculation. Second, it must encourage people to vote in such contests with European and not national priorities in mind. Third, it must support a

---

[94] See: Ibid. See also: http://politics.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,9061,981152,00.html).

European public forum of shared communication and debate. Fourth, it must produce widespread acceptance of supranationally defined democratic outcomes.

In terms of education, the EU must also address the problem that a significant number of citizens do not feel informed about European issues and do not understand its political system.[95] The EU must also challenge the Eurosceptic perceptions of a non-democratic bureaucratic superstate that is far removed from the lives and interests of its citizens that it imposes upon. For example, it could advertise that the EP is freerer than its national counterparts of executive domination.[96] Indeed, it could publicly compare itself to the more centralized system of government that exists in Britain. This could improve public support by exposing the contradictions within the pragmatic British Eurosceptic concern for the undemocratic accountability of the EU. However, the EU still requires a more positive image to promote. It must address the democratic deficits that have alienated the citizenry from the process. Citizens will not feel part of the European political community if they feel that they cannot play an active role in the decisions that shape its development.

Of course, the existing intergovernmental shape of the EU does not provide a basis for such a supranational political community. This form serves to dampen public participation in the process because the citizenry know that the EU merely reflects a collection of their already-expressed and exacted national interests rather than a new collective supranational interest. To improve its supranational democratic accountability, the executive power of the EU (that is, the Council of

---

[95] See: Magnette, P. (2003) 'European Governance and Civic Participation: Beyond Elitist Citizenship?', *Political Studies*, Volume 51, No. 1, p. 148. See also: Hix, S. (1999) *The Political System of the European Union*. (London: Macmillan).

[96] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) *Legitimacy and the European Union*. (London, New York: Longman). p. 83. For a discussion of the performance of the EU, see: Ibid. pp. 94-122.

Ministers and the Commission) must become politically responsible to a more powerful EP that is, in turn, answerable to a European-wide electorate. The EP could be given a final say in the making of new laws. It could also be given a fuller role in the formation and political survival of the Commission. The participation of a supranational citizenry could also be improved by giving them the power to elect the Commission and its Presidency.[97] Pan-European referenda could be held on major issues, possibly at the same time as elections to the EP.[98]

In sum, effective supranational democratic legitimation requires four components. First, openness and transparency of process, so that the public, its European representatives can view, understand and receive justifications for executive decisions. Second, EU leadership must be obliged to give explanations and answer questions to a publicly visible EP that would need, in turn, to be endowed with sanctions to publicly identify and remove office holders. Third, a strong and publicly accessible Court of justice to sustain and defend citizen rights. Fourth, the scope to use European elections to remove political leadership or to 'guard the guardians' by sanctioning members of a EP who have been insufficiently vigilant on their behalf.[99]

Moreover, this chapter has emphasized that the European political community must be constructed from a shared commitment to common civic rights and values. Such 'constitutional patriotism' demands a European written constitution that reflects the liberal democratic principle of popular sovereignty that confirms

---

[97] Bogdanor, V. (1986) 'The Future of the EC: Two Models of Democracy', *Government and Opposition*, Volume 21, No. 2, pp. 161-76, and Bogdanor, V. (1996) 'The European Union, the Political Class and the People', in: J. Hayward (ed.) *Elitism, Populism and European Politics*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

[98] Weiler, J. H. H. (1997) 'Legitimacy and Democracy of Union Governance', in: G. Edwards and A. Pijpers (eds) *The Politics of European Treaty Reform*. (London: Pinter).

[99] Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) Op. Cit. p. 82-3.

that political authority in Europe lies with its citizenry. The draft European Constitutional Treaty (2003), which includes a legally binding charter of fundamental rights, is a positive move in this direction.

In all, the development of a European identity requires the construction of a common European citizenship that requires public participation in a shared political future. In practice, this requires the guarantee of rights as well as equality of respect and opportunity. Such guarantees would also give citizens the confidence that their basic interests would not be infringed by any electoral defeat at the European level, and would serve to limit what was at stake in the electoral contest.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Laclau and Mouffe's project for a radical plural democracy and citizenship to see whether it could provide the means for developing a new universal and democratic European identity. That is, it was assessed whether it could provide a new *credible* social imaginary for Europe that could dissolve the existing national antagonisms and capitalist focus upon effective global economic competition.

Relatedly, by articulating a new egalitarian ideal that is sensitive to the contemporary proliferation of democratic struggles, this chapter considered whether a radical plural democracy and citizenship could challenge the neo-liberal 'anti-democratic offensive' that has been particularly strong in Britain, as reflected in the resistance to European political integration. These particularist struggles

could be unified to develop a new universal hegemonic project for the European Left, and such a democratic equivalence could be established by developing a collective will that represents the liberal democratic pursuit of 'freedom and equality for all'. In the aim of developing a supranational European identity, these new social movements would be progressive agents of change because they would represent democratic struggles that transcend national subject positions. Moreover, as argued in *Chapter 6*, such non-national hegemonic agents could help us construct a universal that does not reflect the particularisms of any single member state. In addition, rather than attempting to dissolve political conflicts between member states, Mouffe argues that we should make such national antagonisms compatible with pluralist democracy by turning 'antagonism' into 'agonism'. By pursing an agonistic democracy, we could make room for a new confrontational politics between member states who agree upon the 'democratic rules of the game' while disagreeing about the precise interpretation of these rules.

In all, this chapter has shown how a European radical plural democracy and citizenship could be constituted by a universal commitment to democratic rules and procedures and a grammar of content that embodies its corresponding ethico-political principles of 'freedom and equality for all'. This thesis accepts that radical plural democracy would provide a progressive social imaginary for Europe. The pursuit of an 'ever closer union' would reflect a common commitment to democracy rather than to just economic competitiveness in the global capitalist market. However, as was discussed above and will now be summarized, there are various problems and limitations.

First, a radical plural democracy and citizenship would not overcome the problem posed by different interpretations of the same key principles, as currently exists between the different discourses of Europe. Second, there is also the problem of identifying potential agents of change for Britain. Third, the Eurocentric conditions of a radical plural democracy and citizenship suggest that Britain would remain outside its constitutive limits, and thus, it would reinforce rather than resolve the existing antagonism between Britain and Continental Europe that has obstructed the process of European integration. Fourth, as for Tassin's conception of a federal European political community, Mouffe's 'associational democracy' would be obstructed by Britain's aberrant liberal conception of the abstract individual. However, for both these projects, although their proposed federal and 'bottom-up' democratic principles are Eurocentric, it is precisely these principles that make them amenable to a process of supranational integration. In all, the problem is that these projects do not provide an effective means of invoking such progressive principles in discourses that do not already have the necessary political conditions, as evidenced by Britain. Nevertheless, with the problems of radical plural democracy aside, Laclau and Mouffe's concept of social antagonism can still elucidate upon how such progressive political change can be invoked in Britain, and how its antagonism with Europe can be dissolved, by developing a new universal constitutive outside in a confrontation with a common enemy or adversary that resides outside the constitutive limits of the EU.

Conclusion

Summary of research findings

This thesis had two interrelated research aims: to make the phenomenon of British Euroscepticism intelligible in order to identify possible solutions to it, and to examine the possibility of a universal and democratic European identity. *Part II* of this thesis applied the discourse-theoretical approach to the first aim and *Part III* applied it to the second.

Chapter 4 illustrated how the process of European (political) integration had been obstructed because Britain and Continental Europe had different (hegemonic) political and governmental discourses, and thus, conflicting interpretations of the same concepts and principles, such as 'federalism', 'subsidiarity' and 'European union'. Such different interpretations of the same key principles had obstructed effective debate upon European integration. These principles were 'floating signifiers' because they had liberal democratic signifieds in Continental Europe and liberal-individualist signifieds in Britain. Consequently, they were ambiguous in the sense that agreement upon them did not represent any progress towards 'an ever closer union' because they signified different things to different member states. Therefore, agreement upon what is signified by such key signifiers is the

crucial starting point for the development of a European union. As for the theoretical analysis of the European process, there has to be a universal discourse - a common set of ideas and meanings - before judgements and decisions can be meaningful and commonly applied.

It was observed that the British *political* discourse of liberal-individualism informed a *plural* conception of international relations as a sphere of competing individual member states (that is, 'liberal-individualism writ large'). By contrast, the Continental European political discourse of liberal democracy privileged a conception of a supranational European community that reflected the republican democratic rationale of *unity* and a common good. In terms of *governmental* discourse, the 'bottom up' Continental European conceptions of *popular* sovereignty and *participatory responsive* government allowed for supranational government, but the British upper national limits of absolute *parliamentary* sovereignty and *representative responsible* government did not. In sum, British political and governmental discourse reflected a liberal-individualist or realist conception of *intergovernmental cooperation* and Continental European discourse reflected a neo-functionalist conception of European *supranational integration*.

The aim of *Chapter 5* was to explain *why* British discourse had developed in opposition to Continental European discourse, and *why* Britain opposed European integration as a consequence. To this end, the discourse-theoretical concept of social antagonism was applied to explain how this conflict in discourse reflected a British antagonism with Continental Europe. It was demonstrated that the construction of the British (discursive system of) identity involved the construction of this antagonism, and thus, that British-European integration was obstructed

because Continental Europe and its hegemonic discourse represented its 'constitutive outside' (or its 'radical and threatening otherness'). In sum, British Euroscepticism represented a British antagonism with Continental Europe, and thus, with the EU.

This antagonism was a discursive response to dislocation. The British identity was disrupted by dislocations that were harnessed through the construction of this antagonism. These dislocations opened gaps in the British discursive structure that were sutured by myths constructed by hegemonic projects. That is, these hegemonic projects responded to the desire for order and stability invoked by dislocation. Significant to our understanding of Euroscepticism, the myths of 'parliamentary liberalism' and the 'British nation' were constructed in opposition to Continental Europe and its hegemonic discourse because it was identified as a cause of dislocation. Thus, Continental Europe and its hegemonic discourse represented their constitutive outside. These Eurosceptic myths were discursively articulated as 'national parliamentary liberalism', and as a consequence of their hegemonic success, they became articulated moments of the British discursive system of identity.

In *Part III, Chapter 6* observed that orthodox approaches to European integration have failed to resolve the tension between the two contradictory choices of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, which reflects the problem posed by the universal and the particular. It was explained that we can overcome the pivotal dilemmas invoked by such conceptual dyads by deconstructing their contradictory principles and inscribing them within a Derridean undecidable logic that incorporated both without privileging one or the other.

It was also argued that orthodox modernist approaches to European integration have failed to resolve the identity and democratic deficits of the EU. Such approaches have reflected the same nationalist and capitalist foundations of modernity that have prevented the possibility of a universal and democratic European identity. Moreover, the discourse of modernity no longer pertains to the contemporary world. As modernist approaches were originally developed for national and homogeneous societies, they obstruct democratic representation of supranational and multicultural communities such as Europe. Furthermore, the essentialist and Eurocentric foundation of modernity has limited the possibility of progressive change because its ideas are advanced as the ne*cessary* and *true* body of the universal.

In response to these problems, it was revealed how the unresolvable tension between universalism and particularism makes it possible to break the attachment of the European universal with the particular content of modernity. In all, it must be recognised that the existing universal discourse of modernity is *problematic* and *contingent*, and thus, that it *must* and *can* be modified.

To complete this thesis, *Chapter 7* assessed whether Laclau and Mouffe's project for a radical plural democracy and citizenship could provide a more *credible* content for the European universal. To overcome national antagonisms, I argued that we need to identity non-national hegemonic agents that can construct a European universal that does not reflect the particularisms of any single member state. Following Laclau and Mouffe, such agents could be the proliferation of new social movements. These social movements would be *progressive* because they represent struggles that transcend national boundaries and antagonisms.

Moreover, they would hegemonize a more democratic content for the European universal. They could also be *successful* hegemonic agents because they represent political struggles that reflect the increasing diversity in identifications and subject positions in contemporary Europe. Additionally, the *hybridization* and *nomadization* of identity could contribute to the dissolution of antagonistic frontiers. We could also make existing national antagonisms compatible with plural democracy by turning *antagonism* into *agonism*.

Section 2 of this chapter considered the possibility of developing Mouffe's conception of a radical plural democratic citizenship in Europe. It was proposed that this radical reworking of liberal and communitarian traditions would provide a progressive citizenship for Europe. Moreover, since it represents a move beyond both liberalism and communitarianism, it would help resolve the conflict between British liberal-individualism and Continental European republican (and social) democracy that has obstructed the construction of a universal European community.

The implications of the discourse-theoretical approach

In *Part II* of this thesis, social antagonism proved to be a very effective concept for explaining the *problem* of British Euroscepticism as well as providing a *solution*. In *Part II*, it was explained how this antagonism could be dissolved by constructing a new social antagonism with an enemy or adversary outside the constitutive limits of a universal European identity. That is, the dissolution of one antagonism requires the construction of another. Thus, in broader terms, the concept of social antagonism provides a valuable means for conceiving how progressive change in

both Britain and Europe is possible. It explains how both discursive systems of identity can be reconstructed, and antagonisms between them dissolved, by developing a new universal constitutive outside. Thus, there is a danger that the dissolution of existing antagonisms may result from the identification of a new radical otherness that has greater costs. For instance, similar to the unifying effects of World War II, contemporary political events suggest that Europe may become unified in a war with the Middle East.

The concept of hegemony was also instructive to our understanding of how to resolve the British obstruction to European integration. It explains how deconstruction and reconstitution of identity is achieved in and through new hegemonic struggles. Thus, it makes it possible to conceive how we can deconstruct the British national identity and constitute a new universal European identity. The content of a new universal European political community would be defined through hegemonic struggles at a supranational level.

Following Laclau and Mouffe, it is through such hegemonic struggle that Europe could be introduced to a new radical democratic social imaginary. Moreover, it would be through this supranational hegemonic struggle that Britain would submit to these radical democratic rules and principles, and as a consequence, become part of this new universal European discursive system of identity. By identifying non-national hegemonic agents for this project, the new social imaginary would dissolve the national antagonisms that have obstructed supranational integration in the past.

Most crucially, it is the anti-essentialism of discourse theory that can provide the impetus for such progressive change. Once we accept that the precarious unity of *multiple selves* is not determined by any essentialist identity, we can begin to construct a new universal European community that dissolves existing national antagonisms. With regard to changes in discourse, the anti-essentialist perspective provides an effective way of questioning existing hegemonic projects by undermining their claim to truth. It is such questioning that makes progressive change possible. As discourse theory emphasizes, discourses are not determined or privileged by any essence or foundation. Rather than being self-evident and uncontroversial, discourses are *contingent* and are the result of political decisions taken by hegemonic agents in the *undecidable* terrain. Although they may become *sedimented* and *instutionalized* over time, their political and controversial status can be re-activated when they are put into question. Therefore, with regard to European integration, any 'awkward' discursive moments are open to dispute and change.

Moreover, in accordance with its anti-essentialist propositions, discourse theory rejects structural determinism and advances a concept of structural dislocation that widens the field of the possible. Dislocation deprives the structure of its determining capacity, and thus, reveals the limit, incapacity, and contingency of any discursive structure. As dislocation is the concept of the impossibility of structural determination, it is the very form of temporality, possibility and freedom.

In political terms, *Part III* of this thesis emphasized that an increase in participation is crucial to the future development of the EU. Four observations pointed to this conclusion. First, participation would provide the sense of belonging at the

European level that is required to overcome the sense of nationhood that has obstructed supranational integration process. Second, there has been a steady decline in participation in European elections, and combined with the 'second-order' problem, this low electoral turnout is undermining the existing democratic procedures of the EU. Third, the significance of participation is emphasized when we accept the *constitutive impurity* of representation and abandon the pursuit of *perfect representation*. Finally, a European political community is constitutive of a European citizenship that requires citizens to participate in the construction of their shared political future by actively engaging in the constant re-enactment of the political common good. It is only through such active and constant participation that citizens will achieve a sense of the right, a conception of justice, and a feeling of belonging.

The problem is how to invoke such an increase in participation. Here, there is a vicious cycle in the sense that, although participation rather than representation may be the key, an improvement in democratic representation and accountability is required to give the people of Europe a reason to participate. Thus, the EU must address the democratic deficits that have alienated the citizenry from the process of European integration. Citizens will not feel part of the European political community if they feel that they cannot play an active role in the decisions that shape its development. To overcome the apathy that is evident within previous European elections, people must feel that their vote in elections counts for something and that it has an impact upon the future shape of Europe as well as their own lives. In particular, participation is dampened by the knowledge that elections do not give the people the power to elect or de-select their leadership or even choose between different manifestos.

Additionally, combined with a strong and publicly accessible Court of Justice, a written constitution would help provide the guarantee of rights that is necessary to give citizens the confidence that their basic interests would be protected against infringement by electoral outcomes at the European level. The draft European Constitutional Treaty (2003), which includes a legally binding charter of fundamental rights, is a positive move in this direction.

In terms of education, the EU must address the problem that a significant number of citizens do not feel informed about European issues and do not understand its political system. The EU must also challenge the Eurosceptic perception of a non-democratic bureaucratic superstate that is far removed from the lives and interests of the citizens that it imposes upon. For example, it could advertise that the EP suffers from less executive domination than its national counterparts. Indeed, it could publicly compare itself to the more centralized system of government that exists in Britain. This would also improve public support by exposing the contradictions within the pragmatic British Eurosceptic concern for the undemocratic accountability of the EU. However, the EU still requires a more positive image to promote. The episodes of fraud and budget mismanagement only serve to reinforce negative Eurosceptic images of a corrupt European superstate.

Discourse theory as a methodological framework for political analysis

With regard to political research, essentialist and reductionist theoretical methodologies can be limited by their failure to consider the valuable insights that other theoretical paradigms may contribute. In contrast, discourse theory openly

endorses methodological flexibility and pluralism, and warns against any totalising master methodology. Following Derrida, we must be methodological bricoleurs, always ready to adapt our methodology to new challenges and circumstances. We must refrain from the misguided pursuit of an all-purpose technique for political analysis. The methodology applied may vary from study, and the development of a totalizing master methodology will only serve to repress new forms of analysis that may improve our knowledge.

Thus, congruent with the anti-essentialism of discourse theory, methodology should be flexible and open-minded. In terms of *flexibility*, it must be as fluid as the discourses it analyses. Since the discourses we study are constantly changing, we cannot solve the methodological question once and for all. A particular articulation of methodological paradigms will be effective for a particular study at a particular moment in time. In terms of *openness*, effective political analysis requires us to be ready to identify and embrace the strengths of other theoretical paradigms.

Such an anti-essentialist approach to methodology allows discourse theory to circumvent difficulties in theoreticist, positivist and empirical forms of research. While acknowledging the importance of theoretical frameworks in forming the objects of research, its flexibility and openness allows it to be restructured in application. Such qualities make it possible to articulate and modify a plurality of concepts and theoretical frameworks to suit particular research foci.

Similarly, to improve our understanding of Euroscepticism, we can explore and integrate other theories. For example, the contemporary social psychological

analyses of nationalism by Michael Billig[1], Susan Condor[2], and Stephen Reicher and Nick Hopkins[3], could be articulated with a discourse-theoretical approach to this subject. Following the move in discourse theory itself, further application of the work of Žižek may also offer new valuable insights. We could also look to other post-structuralist theories, such as the analysis of sociolinguistics and symbolic power provided by Pierre Bourdieu.[4]

Future research possibilities

This thesis focussed upon the British obstruction to the process of European integration that culminated in the ratification crisis of the TEU in 1992-3. To update this study, we could examine the impact of 'New Labour' upon previous obstructive positions. For example, we could compare the Labour Government's response to the new European constitution with previous British government reactions to EU/EC initiatives, such as the TEU. As this research focussed predominantly upon British *governmental* discourse, we could also assess changes in attitude within all major political parties.

Since 1992, it is apparent that there have been political changes in Britain that give good reason for optimism about the future development of British-European relations. For example, although the Conservative Party has remained predominantly Eurosceptic, the Labour Party has extracted itself from its former commitment to a British withdrawal from Europe since this position was perceived

---

[1] See, for example: Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism*. (London: Sage).
[2] See, for example: Condor, S. (2000) 'Pride and Prejudice: Identity Management in English People's Talk about 'this Country'', *Discourse and Society*, Volume 11, No. 2, pp. 175-206.
[3] See, for example: Reicher, S. and N. Hopkins (2001) *Self and Nation*. (London: Sage).
[4] See, for example: Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

to be a major contributing factor to its large defeat in the 1983 General Election.[5] With regard to the Labour Party, we could also examine whether the declared abandonment of its socialist heritage has been reflected in a consequent abandonment of the national parliamentary road to this end, and thus, to the left-wing rejection of European *supranational* integration. Moreover, Scottish and Welsh devolution in 1997 represented a significant blow to the traditional doctrine of national parliamentary sovereignty that had obstructed European supranational integration. Therefore, further research could examine the impact of devolution upon the process of British-European integration.

We could also broaden our understanding of Euroscepticism by examining the particularisms of other member states that have also obstructed the process of European integration. As argued within the domestic politics approach of George et al, a *comparative* analysis is necessary because we need to examine the particularity of each member state in order to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the process of European integration. Indeed, although Britain has been a relatively awkward partner of the EU, other member states, such as Belgium, have also opposed particular aspects or issues of this process. The development of a comparative analysis would also help prevent the *false particularisation* of Britain that occurs when Continental Europe is lumped together as a single homogeneous identity in order to emphasize the particularity of Britain.

In addition, future studies could explore the cultural 'spill-over' invoked by the process of European integration, as well as the impact of the growing communication and travel possibilities upon the development of a new

---

[5] See: Edwards, G. (1992) 'Central Government', in S. George (ed.) (1992) *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). p. 128-9.

supranational European identity. Such studies could attempt to assess the degree of hybridization and nomadization in identity that has been produced by these factors.

New research could also analyse the impact of enlargement upon the EU. The new European constitution will increase the number of member states from fifteen to twenty-five and produce a citizenship of approximately 450 million.[6] As the number of members continues to grow, the influence of major Continental Europe member states, such as Germany and France, is being diluted. Moreover, as the diversity of membership broadens, is it becoming increasingly impossible to define or develop any notion of a universal European identity? Indeed, increases in membership are exacerbating the problem of achieving universal agreement upon the future shape of Europe. Thus, we could assess whether enlargement is only leading to a broadening, rather than a deepening, of the EU. To this end, we could examine the impact of changes in decision-making procedures upon the process of European political integration. For example, will 'weighted' qualified majority voting lead to a more supranational union? Will it help overcome the emphasized democratic deficits?

Indeed, we must continue to critically assess the democratic progress of the EU. We can only argue that Euroscepticism is a negative phenomenon if the project of European integration proves itself to be a credible option. Moreover, to help overcome Euroscepticism, research must promote the advantages of more a positive approach to European integration. It must also play an active role in the development of a more progressive democratic discourse in Europe. As this thesis

---

[6] See: Black, I. (2003) 'Budget Clash Hits Talks on EU Constitution', *The Guardian*, 29 November, p. 18.

has argued, it is our responsibility as citizens to actively participate in the process that is shaping our common European future.

Bibliography

Adams, W. J. (ed.) *Singular Europe: Economy and Polity of the European Community after 1992*. (Ann Arbor, MF: University of Michigan Press).

Adonis, A. and S. Jones (1991) *Subsidiarity and the Community's Constitutional Future*. (Oxford: Nuffield College).

Aglietta, M. (1979) *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation*. (London: Verso).

Albrow, M. (1974) *Bureaucracy*. (London: Macmillan).

Aldrich, R. J. (1998) 'British Intelligence and the Anglo-American "Special Relationship" during the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, Volume 24, No. 3. pp. 331-51.

Amin, S. (1988) *Eurocentrism*. (New York: Monthly Review Press).

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso).

Anderson, P. (1987) 'The Figures of Descent', *New Left Review*, No. 161, January-February, pp. 20-77.

Anderson, P. (1992) *English Questions*. (London: Verso).

Anderson, P. J. and T. Weymouth (1999) *Insulting the Public? The British Press and the European Union.* (London, New York: Longman).

Arendt, H. (1973) [1963] *On Revolution*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin). p. 55. Originally published by Viking Press, New York.)

Ascher, A. [alias Pavel Axelrod] (1972) *Pavel Axelrod and the Development of Menshevism*. Russian Research Center Studies. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).

Axelrod, R. (1984) *The Evolution of Cooperation*. (New York: Basic Books).

Axelrod, R. and R. O. Keohane (1985) 'Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions', *World Politics*, Volume 38, October. pp. 226-54.

Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1993) 'Whips or Scorpions? The Maastricht Vote and Conservative MPs', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 46, No. 2. pp. 151-166.

Baker, D., A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1994) 'The Parliamentary Siege of Maastricht 1993: Conservative Divisions and British Ratification', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 47, No. 1, pp. 37-60.

Baker, D., I. Fountain, A. Gamble and S. Ludlam (1995) 'Backbench Conservative Attitudes to Europe', *The Political Quarterly*, Volume 66, No. 2, pp. 221-233.

Baker, D. and D. Seawright (eds) (1998) *Britain For and Against Europe: British Politics and the Question of European Integration*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Balibar, E. and I. Wallerstein (eds) (1991) *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities.* (London: Verso).

Baxter, S. (1991) 'Moulding the Break: Harder than it Looks'. *New Statesman and Society*. 1 November, Volume 4, No. 175, p. 23.

Beetham, D. and C. Lord (1998) *Legitimacy and the European Union.* (London, New York: Longman).

Berger, S. (1981) *Organizing Interests in Western Europe*. (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Berlin, I. (1975) [1969] *Four Essays on Liberty*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Bertramsen, R., J. Thomsen and J. Torfing (eds) (1991) *State, Economy and Society*. (London: Unwin Hyman).

Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism*. (London: Sage).

Birch, A. H. (1964) *Representative and Responsible Government*. (London: Allen and Unwin).

Birch, A. H. (1998) [1967] *The British System of Government*. Tenth Edition. (London, New York: Routledge).

Blair, T. (2003a) 'Anti-Europeanism is an Out of Date Delusion', *Speech by Prime Minister Tony Blair on the future of the European Union*, Warsaw, Poland, Friday 30 May, http://www.labour.org.uk/warsaweurope.

Blair, T. (2003b) *Prime Minister's Statement on the European Council Meeting in Greece on 19 and 20 June*, Monday 23 June, http://www.labour.org.uk/pmtbeuropeancouncil.

Black, I. (2003) 'Budget Clash Hits Talks on EU Constitution', *The Guardian*, 29 November, p. 18.

Blaut, J. M. (1993) *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*. (London, New York: Guildford Press)

Bogdanor, V. (1986) 'The Future of the EC: Two Models of Democracy', *Government and Opposition*, Volume 21, No. 2, pp. 161-76.

Bogdanor, V. and G. Woodcock (1991) 'The European Community and Sovereignty', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 44, No. 1, October, pp. 481-92.

Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Boyce, B. (1993) 'The Democratic Deficit of the European Community', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 46, No. 4, October, pp. 458-477.

Bulmer, S. (1983) 'Domestic Politics and European Community Policy-making', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 21, No. 4, pp. 349-363.

Bulmer, S. and W. Patterson (1987) *The Federal Republic of Germany and the European Community*. (London: Allen and Unwin).

Burke, E. (1815-27) *Works*. (London: Rivington).

Burke, E. (1993) [1790] *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Edited by L. G. Mitchell. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Butler, J., E. Laclau and S. Žižek (2000) *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. (London: Verso).

Callinicos, A. (1989) *Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Clegg, R. (1989) *Frameworks of Power*. (London: Sage).

Cohen, R. (1994) *Frontiers of Identity: The British and the Others*. (London, New York: Longman).

Colley, L. (1992) *Britons: The Forging of the Nation*. (London: Yale University Press).

Condor, S. (2000) 'Pride and Prejudice: Identity Management in English People's Talk about 'this Country'', *Discourse and Society*, Volume 11, No. 2, pp. 175-206.

Cooper, R. C. (1972) 'Economic Interdependence and Foreign Policies in the 1970's', *World Politics*, Volume 24, No. 2, January, pp. 159-181.

Cram, L., D. Dinan and N. Nugent (eds) (1999) *Developments in the European Union*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan).

Crick, B. (1975) 'Pandora's Box, Sovereignty and the Referendum', *Political Quarterly*, April-June, Volume 46, No. 2, pp. 123-6.

Critchley, S. (1998) 'Metaphysics in the Dark', *Political Theory*, Volume 26, No. 6, pp. 803-17.

Critchley, S. (1992) *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*. (Oxford: Blackwell).

Crosbie, P. (1997) 'Germany is taking over the World', *The Daily Express,* 9 April. p. 9.

Crouch, C. and D. Marquand (eds) (1992) *Towards Greater Europe: A Continent without an Iron Curtain*. (Oxford: Blackwell).

Culler, J. (1986) *Ferdinand de Saussure*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press).

Culler, J. (1988) *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions*. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press).

Dallmayr, F. (1988) 'Hegemony and Democracy: On Laclau and Mouffe', *Strategies*, Volume 1, pp. 29-49.

Denver, D., Fisher, J., Cowley, P. and C. Pattie (eds) (1998) *British Elections and Parties Review 9: The 1997 General Election*. (London: Frank Cass).

Derrida, J. (1978) [1967] *Writing and Difference*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

Derrida J. (1981) [1972] *Positions.* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).

Derrida, J. (1988) [1977] *Limited Inc*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press).

Derrida, J. (1992) 'Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority', in D. Cornell, M. Rosenfeld and D. G. Carlson (eds) *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. (London: Routledge), pp. 3-67.

Derrida, J. (1994) *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Working of Mourning, and the New International*. (New York: Routledge).

Deutsch, K., S. Burrell, R. Kann, M. Lee, M. Lichtermann, F. Loewenheim and R. Van Wagenen (1957) *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

Dinan, D. (1994) *Ever Closer Union?* (London: Macmillan).

Dogan, M. and D. Pelsay (1984) *How to Compare Nations: Strategies in Comparative Politics*. (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House).

Donnellan, K. (1974) 'Speaking of Nothing', *The Philosophical Review*, Volume 83, pp. 3-32.

Dunleavy, P., A. Gamble, I. Holliday, and G. Peele (eds) (1997) *Developments in British Politics 5.* (London: Macmillan).

Dunleavy, P., A. Gamble, I. Holliday, and G. Peele (eds) (2000) *Developments in British Politics 6*. (London: Macmillan).

Dreyfus, H. L. and P. Rainbow (1986) [1982] *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. (Brighton: Harvester).

Eagleton T. (1991) *Ideology: An Introduction*. (London: Verso).

Easton, D. (1971) [1953] *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).

Edwards, G. and A. Pijpers (eds) *The Politics of European Treaty Reform.* (London: Pinter).

European Court of Justice (1975) *Bulletin Supplement*, No. 9.

Evans, P., H. Jacobson, and R. D. Putnam (eds) (1993) *Double-edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*. (Berkeley: University of California Press).

Ewing, D. K. and C. A. Gearty (1990) *Freedom under Thatcher.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Fairclough, N. (1989) *Language and Power.* (London, New York: Longman).

Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse.* (London: Edward Arnold).

Fairclough, N. (1997) *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley).

Featherstone, K. (1994) 'Jean Monnet and the 'Democratic Deficit' of the EU', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 32, No. 2, June, pp. 149-170.

Fink, B. (1995) *The Lacanian Subject*: *Between Language and Jouissance*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

Forster, A. (2002) *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties Since 1945*. (London, New York: Routledge).

Foucault, M. (1985) [1969] *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. (London: Tavistock).

Foucault, M. (1986) [1976] *Power/Knowledge*. (Brighton: Harvester).

Freeman, J. R. (1989) *Democracy and Markets: The Politics of Mixed Economies*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press).

Freud, S. (1986) [1900] *The Interpretation of Dreams.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin).

Furet, F. [1981] (1978) *Interpreting the French Revolution*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Translated by Elborg Forster. Originally published as 'Penser la Révolution Francias'. (Paris: Gallimard).

Gamble, A. (1990) *Britain in Decline: Economic Policy, Political Strategy and the British State*. (London: Macmillan).

Garel-Jones, T. (1993) 'The UK Presidency: A View from Brussels', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 31, pp. 261-7.

Gellner, E. (1964) *Thought and Change*. (London: Routledge).

Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

George, S. (1989) 'Nationalism, Liberalism and the National Interest: Britain, France, and the European Community', *Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics*, No. 67, (Glasgow).

George, S. (1991) *Britain and European Integration since 1945*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

George, S. (ed.) (1992) *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

George, S. (1994) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Second Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

George, S. (1998) *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. Third Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Giddens, A. (1971) *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Giddens, A. (1979) *Central Problems in Social Theory*. (London: Macmillan).

Giddens, A. (1982) *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory*. (London: Macmillan).

Gödel, K. (1931) 'Über Formal Unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und Verwandter Systeme I', *Monatshefte für Mathematik und Physik*, Volume 38, pp. 173-98.

Goldthorpe, J. (ed.) (1984) *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Gorman, T. (1993) *The Bastards: Dirty Tricks and the Challenge of Europe*. (London: Pan Books).

Gramsci, A. (1971) [1948-51] *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. (London: Lawrence & Wishart).

Gramsci, A. (1978) [1921-26] *Selections from Political Writings (1921-26)*. (London: Lawrence & Wishart).

Greenfield, L. (1992) *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Grieco, J. M. (1988) 'Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism', *International Organization*, Volume, 42, No. 3, pp. 458-507.

Grieco, J. M. (1995) 'The Maastricht Treaty, Economic and Monetary Union and the Neo-Realist Research Programme', *Review of International Studies*, Volume 21, pp 21-40.

The Guardian (2003a) *EU Convention to unveil Charter of Rights*, Matthew Tempest and agencies, 10.45am update Tuesday May 27, http://politics.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,9061,964182,00.html.

The Guardian (2003b) *EU Constitution 'No Threat to UK Identity*, Press Association, Wednesday 18 June, http://politics.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,9061,980035,00.html.

Haas, E.B. (1958) *The Uniting of Europe*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

Haas, E. B. (1964) *Beyond the Nation-State; Functionalism and International Organization*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press).

Haas, E. B. (1967) 'The Uniting of Europe and the Uniting of Latin America', *Journal of Common Market Studies*. Volume 5, No. 4, pp. 315-43.

Haas, E. B. (1975) *The Obsolescence of Regional Integration Theory.* (Research Series, No. 25, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkley, California).

Habermas, J. (1984-1987) *The Theory of Communicative Action: Vols I-II.* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Habermas, J. (1990) [1985] *The Philosophical Discourses of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. (Cambridge: Polity Press). [originally published in Frankfurt, Germany].

Hall, S. (1988) *The Hard Road to Renewal*. (London: Verso).

Hall, S. and M. Jacques (eds) (1983) *Thatcherism.* (London: Lawrence & Wishart).

Hallstein, W. (1970) *L'Europe Inachevée*. (Paris: Robert Laffont).

Hanrieder, W. and G. Auton (1980*) The Foreign Policies of West Germany, France and Britain*. (Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey).

Hanson, A. and M. Walles (1984) *Governing Britain*. (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins).

Harrison, R. (1974) *Europe in Question: Theories of Regional International Integration*. (London: Allen and Unwin).

Harryvan, A. G. and J. van der Harst (eds) (1997) *Documents on European Union*. (London: Macmillan).

Hayward, J. (ed.) *Elitism, Populism and European Politics*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Held, D. (1987) *Models of Democracy*. (Cambridge: Polity).

H. M. Government (1984) 'Europe - The Future', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 23, No. 1, September, pp. 73-81.

Hill, C. (1983) *National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation*. (London: Allen and Unwin).

Hirst, P. Q. (1989*) After Thatcher*. (London: Collins).

Hirst, P. Q. (1994) *Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economic and Social Governance*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Hix, S. (1999) *The Political System of the European Union*. (London: Macmillan).

HMSO (1990) *Developments in the European Community*, July-December, Cmnd. 1457.

Hobbes, T. (1968) [1651] *Leviathan*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin).

Hobsbawm, E. (1990) *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Hobsbawm, E. and T. Ranger (eds) (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press).

Hoffman, S. (1966) 'Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe'. *Daedalus*, Volume 95, pp. 862-915.

Hoffman, S. (1982) 'Reflections on the Nation-State in Western Europe Today', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 21, Nos. 1-2, pp. 21-37.

Holmes, M. (ed.) (1996) *The Eurosceptical Reader*. (London: Macmillan).

Holub, R. C. (1991) *Jürgen Habermas: Critic in the Public Sphere*. (London: Routledge).

Howarth, D. (1996) 'Ideology, Hegemony and Political Subjectivity, in I. Hampsher-Monk and J. Stanyer (eds) *Contemporary Political Studies 1996*, Volume 2, pp. 951-4.

Howarth, D. (2000) *Discourse*. (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press).

Howarth, D., A. J. Norval and Y. Stavrakakis (eds) (2000) *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change*. (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press).

Howorth, J. and A. Menon (eds) (1997) *The European Union and National Defence Policy*. (London: Routledge).

Huelshoff, M. G. (1993) 'European Integration After the SEA: The Case of the Social Charter', *Political Research Quarterly*, Volume 46, No. 3, pp. 619-640.

Husserl, E. (1970) [1954] 'Appendix 1: Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity', *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. pp. 269-99.

Ifversen, J. (1989) 'Den Franske Revolution mellem Demokrati og Ideologi', *Slagmark*, Volume 13, Summer, pp. 31-52.

The Independent (1988) 15 October.

Jacobs, F., R. Corbett, and M. Shackleton (1995) *The European Parliament*. Third Edition. (London: Catermill).

Jenkins, R. (ed.) (1983) *Britain and the EEC*. (London: Macmillan).

Jervis, R. (1978) 'Cooperation under the Security Dilemma'. *World Politics*, Volume 30, No. 2, January, pp. 167-214.

Jessop, B., Bonnett, K., Bromley, S. and T. Ling (1988) *Thatcherism: A Tale of Two Nations*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Jones, R. A. (2001) *The Politics and Economics of the European Union*. Second Edition. (Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, Massachusetts).

Jowell, J. and D. Oliver (eds) (1985) *The Changing Constitution.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Judge, D. (1988) 'Incomplete Sovereignty: The British House of Commons and the Completion of the Internal Markets in the European Communities', *Parliamentary Affairs*, October, Volume 41, No. 4, pp. 441-55.

Katzenstein, P. J. (ed.) (1978) *Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States*. (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press).

Kay, S. (2003) *Žižek: A Critical Introduction*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Keohane, R. O. (1984) *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press).

Keohane, R. O. (ed.) (1986) *Neorealism and its Critics*. (New York: Columbia University Press).

Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (eds) (1972) *Transnational Relations and World Politics*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).

Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1975) 'International Interdependence and Integration', in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby (eds) *Handbook of Political Science*. Volume 8, Chapter 5. (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley). pp. 363-414.

Keohane, R. O. and J. S. Nye (1977) *Power and Interdependence*: *World Politics in Transition*. (Boston: Little Brown).

Keohane, R. O. and S. Hoffman (eds) (1991) *The New European Community: Decision-making and Institutional Change*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview).

Kolodziej, E. (1974) *French International Policy under De Gaulle and Pompidou*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press).

Krasner, S. D. (ed.) (1983) *International Regimes*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press).

Kripke, S. (1980) *Naming and Necessity*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

Kuhn, T. (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Kuper, A. and J. Kuper (eds) (1996) *The Social Science Encyclopedia*. (London, New York: Routledge).

Lacan, J. (1977) 'The Mirror Image as Formulative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', in *Écrits*. (London: Tavistock).

Lacan, J. (1979) [1977] *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin).

Laclau, E. (1987) 'Psychoanalysis and Marxism', *Critical Enquiry*, Winter, pp. 330-3.

Laclau, E. (1988) 'Metaphor and Social Antagonisms', in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education). p. 249-57.

Laclau, E. (1990a) *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time*. (London, New York: Verso).

Laclau, E. (1991) 'Community and its Paradoxes: Richard Rorty's Liberal Utopia', in Miami Theory Collective (eds) *Community at Loose Ends*. (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press). pp. 83-98.

Laclau, E. (1992b) 'Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity', *October*, Volume 61, Summer, pp. 83-90.

Laclau, E. (1993a) 'Discourse', in R. E. Gooding and P. Pettit (eds) *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*. (Oxford: Blacwell). pp. 431-7.

Laclau, E. (1993b) 'The Signifiers of Democracy', in J. H. Carens (ed.) *Democracy and Possessive Individualism: The Intellectual Legacy of C. B. Macpherson*. (New York: State University of New York Press), pp. 221-31.

Laclau, E. (ed.) (1994) *The Making of Political Identities*. (London: Verso).

Laclau, E. (1994b) 'Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?', in J. Weeks (ed.) *The Lesser Evil and the Greater Good*. (London: Rivers Oram Press). pp. 167-78.

Laclau, E. (1995) 'Subject of Politics, Politics of the Subject', *Differences*, Volume 7, No. 1. pp. 145-64.

Laclau, E. (1996a) [1992] 'Universalism, Particularism and the Question of Identity', in E. Laclau, *Emancipation(s).* (London: Verso). pp. 20-35. Originally published in *October*, Volume 61, Summer, pp. 83-90.

Laclau, E. (1996b) 'The Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology'. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Volume 1, No. 3, pp. 201-20.

Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1982) 'Recasting Marxism: Hegemony and New Political Movements', *Socialist Review*, Volume 12, November. pp. 91-113.

Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. (London: Verso).

Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1987) 'Post-Marxism Without Apologies', *New Left Review*, Volume 166, pp. 79-106.

Laplanche, J. and J. B. Pontalis (1973) *The Language of Psycho-analysis*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.).

Laursen, F. and S. Vanhoonacker (eds) (1992) 'The Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union: Institutional Reforms, New Policies and the International Identity of the European Community'. *European Institute of Public Administration*.

Lawson, D. (1990) 'Saying the Unsayable about the Germans', *The Spectator*, 14 July. Interview with Nicholas Ridley. pp. 8-10.

Lefort, C. (1981) *L'invention Démocratique: Les limites de la domination Totalitaire*. (Paris: Fayard).

Lefort, C. (1986) *The Political Forms of Modern Society*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Lefort, C. (1988) *Democracy and Political Theory*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Lenin, V. I. (1964) [1917] *Collected Works*, Volume 23, August 1916-March 1917. (London: Lawrence & Wishart).

Levermore, R. (2001) *Sport and Identity in International Relations: The 1998 World Cup*. Plymouth International Papers; PIP No. 17. (Plymouth International Studies Centre, University of Plymouth).

Leys, C. (1989) *Politics in Britain: From Labourism to Thatcherism*. (London: Verso).

Liberal Democrats (2001) *Britain's Role in the European Union: Your say in Europe*. Uploaded 9 August,

http://www.libdems.org.uk/index.cfm/page.folders/section.policy/folder.manifestos.

Lindberg, L. N. (1963) *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Lindberg, L. N. (1967) 'The European Community as a Political System: Notes Toward the Construction of a Model', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 5, No. 4, pp. 344-87.

Lindberg, L. N. and S. A. Scheingold (1970) *Europe's Would-Be Polity* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall).

Lindberg, L. N. and S. A. Scheingold (eds) (1971) *Regional Integration: Theory and Research*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).

Lindblom, C. (1977) *Politics and Markets*. (New York: Basic Books).

Linklater, A. (1990) *Beyond Realism and Marxism: Critical Theory and International Relations*. (London: Macmillan).

Lipson, C. (1984) 'International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs', *World Politics*, Volume 37, October. pp. 1-23.

Locke, J. (1960) [1690] *Two Treatise of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett (Cambridge).

Ludlow, P. (1993) 'The UK Presidency: A View from Brussels', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 31, pp. 246-60.

Lynch, M. (2000) *Reaction and Revolutions: Russia 1881-1924.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Educational).

Lynn-Jones, S. M. (ed.) (1991) *The Cold War and After: Prospects for Peace.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press).

Lyotard, J. F. (1984) [1979] *The Postmodern Condition: A Report of Knowledge.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory.* (London: Duckworth).

MacMullen, A. (1999) 'Fraud, Mismanagement and Nepotism: The Committee of Independent Experts and the Fall of the European Commission', *Crime, Law and Social Change*, Volume 31, No. 3, pp. 193-208.

Macpherson, C. B. (1962) *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*: Hobbes to Locke. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Macpherson, C. B. (1964) *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Macpherson, C. B. (1966) *The Real World of Democracy*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Macpherson, C. B. (1977) *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Macpherson, C. B. (1980) *Burke*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Magnette, P. (2003) 'European Governance and Civic Participation: Beyond Elitist Citizenship?', *Political Studies*, Volume 51, No. 1, pp. 144-60.

Major, J. (1993) 'Raise Your Eyes, there is a Land Beyond', *The Economist*, 25 September, Volume 328, No. 7830, pp. 23-4.

Major, J. (1999) *The Autobiography*. (London: HarperCollins.).

Marquand, D. (1988) *The Unprincipled Society*. (London: Fontana).

Marquand, D. (1991a) *The Progressive Dilemma*. (London: Heineman).

Marquand, D. (1991b) 'The Fudge Manufacturers of Maastricht. Why its Time to Switch from Economics to Politics, from Technocracy to Democracy', *The Guardian*, 3 December. p. 19.

Marsh, D. and G. Stoker (eds) (1995) *Theories and Methods in Political Science*. (London: Macmillan).

Marx, K. (1977) [1867-94] *Capital*, Volume I. (London: Lawrence & Wishart).

Meiskens-Wood, E. (1991) *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism*. (London: Verso).

The Miami Theory Collective (ed.) *Community at Loose Ends*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

Middelhoek, A. (1999) 'First Report on Allegations regarding Fraud, Mismanagement and Nepotism in the European Commission', 15 March. (Luxembourg: European Parliament).

Mitrany, D. (1943) *A Working Peace System*. (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Press).

Monnet, J. (1962) 'A Ferment of Change', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 1, pp. 203-11.

Mooers, C. (1991) *The Making of Bourgeois Europe*. (London: Verso).

Moore, B. (1966) *The Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. (Boston: Beacon Press).

Moravcsik, A. (1991) 'Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community', *International Organisation*, Volume 45, No. 1, pp. 19-56.

Moravcsik, A. (1993) 'Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 31, No. 4, pp. 473-524.

Morgenthau, H. (**1958**) *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Second Edition. (New York: Knopf.)

Mosley, H. (1990) 'The Social Dimension of European Integration', *International Labour Review*, Volume 129, No. 2, pp. 147-164.

Motyl, J. (ed.) *Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities*. (New York: Columbia University Press).

Mouffe, C. (ed.) (1979) *Gramsci and Marxist Theory.* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul).

Mouffe, C. (1987) 'Rawls: Political Philosophy without Politics', *Philosophy and Social Criticism,* Volume 13, No. 2, pp. 105-23.

Mouffe, C. (1988b) 'The Civics Lesson', *New Statesman and Society*, No. 7, pp. 29-31.

Mouffe, C. (1988c) 'American Liberalism and its Critics: Rawls, Taylor, Sandel and Waltzer', *Praxis International*, Volume 8, No. 3, pp. 193-206.

Mouffe, C. (1989) 'Radical Democracy: Modern or Postmodern?', in Ross (ed.) *Universal Abandon?* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press). pp. 31-45.

Mouffe, C. (1990) 'Radical Democracy or Liberal Democracy?', *Socialist Review*, May, pp. 57-66.

Mouffe, C. (1991a) 'Pluralism and Modern Democracy: Around Carl Schmitt', *New Formations*, Volume 14, Summer, pp. 1-16.

Mouffe, C. (ed.) (1992a) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. (London: Verso).

Mouffe, C. (1992b). 'Citizenship and Political Identity', *October*, Volume 61, pp. 28-32.

Mouffe, C. (ed.) (1993) *The Return of the Political*. (London: Verso).

Mouffe, C. (1994) 'For a Politics of a Nomadic Identity', in Robertson et al (eds) *Traveller's Tales*. (London: Routledge). pp. 105-13.

Mouffe, C. (1995) 'The End of Politics and the Rise of the Radical Right', *Dissent*, Fall, pp. 498-502.

Mouffe, C. (ed.) (1996) *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*. (New York: Routledge).

Nagel, E. and J. R. Newman (1959) [1958] *Gödel's Proof.* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

Nairn, T. (1977) *The Break-up of Britain*. (London: New Left Books).

Nairn, T. (1988) *The Enchanted Glass*. (London: Hutchison Radius).

Nelson, C. and L. Grossberg (eds) (1988) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture.* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education).

Neunreither, K. (1994) 'The Democratic Deficit of the European Union: Towards Closer Cooperation between the European Parliament and the National Parliaments', *Government and Opposition*, Volume 29, No. 3, pp. 299-314.

Nicholls, P. (1994) 'Why Britain Ought to Remain the Sceptical Man of Europe', *The Western Morning News*, 23 November. p. 4.

Nicoll, W. and T. C. Salmon. (1994) *Understanding the New European Community*. (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf).

Norris, C. (1993) *The Truth about Postmodernism*. (Oxford: Blackwell).

Norton, P. (1978) *Conservative Dissidents: Dissent within the Parliamentary Conservative Party 1970-74*. (London: Temple Smith).

Norton, P. (1984) *The British Polity*. (London: Longman).

Norris, P. (ed.) (1997) 'The 1997 General Election', *Special Issue of Parliamentary Affairs*, October, Volume 50, No. 4.

Norval, A. J. (1996) *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*. (London: Verso).

Nugent, N. (1999) [1989] *The Government and Politics of the European Union*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan).

Nye, J. S. (ed.) (1968) *International Regionalism*. (Boston, Little Brown).

Oakeshott, M. (1975) *On Human Conduct*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Outhwaite, W. (ed.) (1993) *The Blackwell Dictionary of Modern Social Thought*. (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell).

Overbeek, H. (1990) *Global Capitalism and National Decline: The Thatcher Decade in Perspective*. (London: Unwin Hyman).

Palmer, J. (1987) *Europe without America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Peterson, J. (1994) 'Subsidiarity: A Definition to Suit Any Vision?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 47, No. 1, January, pp. 1-22.

Philip, A. B. and C. Baron (1988) 'United Kingdom', in H. Siedentopf and J. Ziller (eds) *Making European Policies Work: The Implementation of Community Legislation in the Member States*. Volume 2, Chapter 10, National Reports, Brussels. pp. 637-713.

Pinder, J. (1985) 'Pragmatikos and Federalis: Reflections on a Conference', *Government and Opposition*, Volume 20, No. 4, pp. 473-487.

Plekhanov, G. V. (1969) [1947] *Fundamental Problems of Marxism.* (London: Lawrence & Wishart).

Pollard, S. (1971) *The Idea of Progress*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin).

Pollard, S. (1982) *The Wasting of the British Economy*. (London: Croom Helm).

Preston, P. W. (1987) *Rethinking Development*. (London: Routledge).

Preston, P. W. (1994) *Europe, Democracy and the Dissolution of Britain: An Essay on the Issue of Europe in UK Public Discourse*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth).

Putnam, R. D. (1988) 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games', *International Organization*, Volume 42, pp. 427-60.

Rallings, C. and M. Thrasher (2000) *British Electoral Facts 1832-1999*. (Aldershot: Ashgate).

Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University).

Rawls, J. (1985) 'Justice as Fairness: Political and Metaphysical', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Volume 14, No. 3, Summer, pp. 223-51.

Rawls, J. (1987) 'The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, Volume 7, No. 1, Spring, pp. 1-25.

Rawls, J. (1993) *Political Liberalism*. (New York: Columbia University Press).

Reicher, S. and N. Hopkins (2001) *Self and Nation*. (London: Sage).

Ritchie, R. (ed.) (1989) *Enoch Powell on 1992*. (London: Anaya Publishers Ltd).

Rorty, R. (1980) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

Rorty, R. (1989) *Contigency, Irony, and Solidarity*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Rorty, R. (1991) *Essays on Heideggar and Others*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Rose, R. (1989) *Politics in England: Change and Resistance*. (London: Macmillan).

Rosenau, I. R. (1992) *Post-modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Rousseau, J-J. (1963) [1762] *The Social Contract and Discourses*. (London: Dent).

Said, E. W. (1978) *Orientalism*. (New York: Pantheon).

Saussure, F. (1981) [1959] *Course in General Linguistics*. (Suffolk: Fontana).

Sbragia, A. (ed.) (1992) *Euro-politics: Institutions and Policy-Making in the 'New' European Community*. (Washington, DC: Brookings).

Schmitt, C. (1976) [1972] *The Concept of the Political*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press).

Schmitt, C. (1985) [1923] *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*. (Baskerville: MIT Press).

Schmitter, P. and G. Lehmbruch (1979) *Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation*. (Beverly Hills, California: Sage).

Schuetz, A. (1944) 'The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology', American Journal of Sociology, Volume 49, No. 6, pp.499-507.

Scott, A., J. Peterson, and D. Millar (1994) 'Subsidiarity: a "Europe of the Regions" v. the British Constitution?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, March, Volume 32, No. 1, pp. 47-67.

Searle, J. (1984) *Intentionality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Seton-Watson, H. (1977) *Nations and States. An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press).

Simon, R. (1982) *Gramsci's Political Thought*: *An Introduction.* (London: Lawrence & Wishart).

Skinner, Q. (1991) 'The Paradoxes of Political Liberty', in Miller (ed.) *Liberty*. (Oxford University Press). pp. 183-205.

Sklair, L. (1991) *Sociology of the Global System*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).

Smith, A. D. (1992) 'National identity and the idea of European unity', *International Affairs*, Volume 68, No. 1, pp. 55-76.

Smith, A. D. (1995) *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era.* (Oxford: Blackwell).

Smith, A. M. (1994) *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Smith, A. M. (1998) *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*. (London, New York: Routledge).

Smith, K. (1987) *The British Economic Class*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin).

Smith, M., S. Smith, and B. White (eds) (1988) *British Foreign Policy: Tradition, Change and Transformation*. (London: Unwin Hyman).

Sorel, G. (1976) [1902] *Critical Essays on Marxism*. (New York: Oxford University Press).

Sorel, G. [1908] (1950) *Reflections on Violence*. (London, New York: Macmillan).

Spicer, M. (1992) *A Treaty Too Far: A New Policy for Europe*. (London: Fourth Estate).

Stanley, J. L. (ed.) (1976) *From Georges Sorel: Essays in Socialism and Philosophy*. (New York: Oxford University Press).

Staten, H. (1985) [1984] *Wittgenstein and Derrida*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

Stavrakakis, Y. (1999) *Lacan and the Political*. (London: Routledge).

Stedman Jones, G. (1983) 'Rethinking Chartism', *Chapter 3*, *Languages of Class*: *Studies in Working Class History, 1832-1982*. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press). pp. 90-178.

Stephens, P. (1997) *Politics and the Pound*. (London: Macmillan).

Strange, S. (1988) *States and Markets*. (London: Pinter).

Sugar, P. F. (ed.) *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio).

Sumic, J. and R. Riha (1994) 'The Reinvention of Democracy in Eastern Europe', *Angelaki*, Volume 1, No. 3, pp. 143-56.

Tant, A. P. (1990) 'The Campaign for Freedom of Information: A Participatory Challenge to Elitist British Government', *Public Administration*, Volume 68, No. 4, pp. 477-91.

Tant, A. P. (1993) *British Government: The Triumph of Elitism*. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth).

Tassin, E. (1992) 'Europe: A Political Community?', in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. (London: Verso). Translated from French into English by Patrick Camiller. pp. 169-92.

Thatcher, M. (1988) *Britain in Europe*. (London: Conservative Political Centre).

Thompson, E. P. (1978) [1965] 'The Peculiarities of the English', *The Poverty of Theory*, pp. 35-91. Previously published in *The Socialist Register*, 1965.

Tilly, C. (1986) *Contentious France*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).

The Times (1997) *The Times*, 6 March.

Torfing, J. (1991) 'A Hegemony Approach to Capitalist Regulation', in R. Bertramsen, J. Thomsen and J. Torfing (eds) *State, Economy and Society*. (London: Unwin Hyman), pp. 35-93.

Torfing, J. (1998) *Politics, Regulation and the Modern Welfare State*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan).

Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek*. (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell).

Townsend, J. (2003) 'Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: A New Paradigm from the Essex School?', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Volume 5, No. 1, February, pp. 129-42.

Tranholm-Mikkelsen, J. (1991) 'Neo-functionalism: Obstinate or Obsolete? A Reappraisal in the Light of the New Dynamism of the EC', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Volume 20, Part 1, pp.1-22.

Trotsky, L. (1971) [1922] *1905: The First Russian Revolution*. (New York: Random House).

Tsoukalis, L. (1977) *The Politics and Economics of European Monetary Integration*. (London: Allen & Unwin).

Tugendhat, C. (1986) *Making Sense of Europe*. (Middlesex: Viking, Harmondsworth).

Tugendhat, C. and W. Wallace (1988) *Options for British Foreign Policy in the 1990s*. (London: Routledge).

Van Kersbergen, K. and B. Verbeek (1994) 'The Politics of Subsidiarity in the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, June, Volume 32, No. 2, pp. 215-236.

Venturini, P. (1988) *1992: The European Social Dimension*. (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities).

Wallace, H., W. Wallace and C. Webb (eds) (1983) *Policy-Making in the European Community*. (Chichester: John Wiley).

Wallace, H. and R. A. Young (eds) (1997) *Participation and Policy-Making in the European Union*. (Oxford: Clarendon).

Wallace, W. (1986) 'What Price Interdependence? Sovereignty and Interdependence in British Politics', *International Affairs*, Volume 62, pp. 367-89.

Wallace, W. (1990) 'Europe: Cry Havoc', *New Statesman and Society*. 9 November, Volume 3, No. 126, pp. 16-17.

Wallace, W. and J. Smith (1995) 'Democracy or Technocracy? European Integration and the Problem of Popular Consent', *Western European Politics*, Volume 18, No. 3, pp. 137-57.

Waltz, K. N. (1959) *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. (New York: Columbia University Press).

Waltz, K. N. (1979) *Theory of International Politics*. (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley).

Weiler, J. H. H. (1999) 'To be a European Citizen: Eros and Civilisation', in: *The Constitution of Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Wheatcroft, G. (1997) 'Two Parties Splash Each Other with Mud from the Same Road', *The Daily Express,* 15 April, p. 10.

Wilde, L. (1990) 'Class Analysis and the Politics of New Social Movements, *Capital and Class*, Winter, Issue 42, pp. 55-78.

Wilde, L. (1994) *Modern European Socialism.* (Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth).

Wood, S. (1999) 'The British General Election of 1997', *Election Studies*, Volume 18, No. 1, pp. 142-147.

Wright, E. and E. Wright (eds) (1999) *The Žižek Reader.* (Oxford: Blackwell).

Young, R. J. C. (1990) *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*. (London: Routledge).

Young, R. J. C. (1996*) Torn Halves: Political Conflict in Literary and Cultural Theory*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

Žižek, S. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (London: Verso).

Žižek, S. (1990) 'East European's Republic of Gilead', *New Left Review*, Volume 183, September-October, pp. 50-62.

Žižek, S. (1991) *For They Know not what They Do: enjoyment as a political factor.* (London: Verso).

Žižek, S. (1994) *Mapping Ideology*. (London: Verso).

Žižek, S. (2001) *On Belief.* (London, New York: Routledge).

Websites

http://www.mii.kurumeu.ac.jp/~leuers/zizek.htm
http://www.lacan.com/bibliographyzi.htm
http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmhansrd.htm
http://www.guardian.co.uk
http://www.financialtimes.co.uk
http://www.the-times.co.uk
http://www.spectator.co.uk
http://www.labour.org.uk
http://www.conservative-party.org.uk
http://www.libdems.org.uk
http://www.euroscep.dircon.co.uk/bg-index.htm